

The IMA logo consists of the letters "IMA" in a white, serif font, centered within a red rectangular field. This field is bordered by two horizontal white lines, one above and one below the text. To the left of the red field is a solid yellow rectangular block.

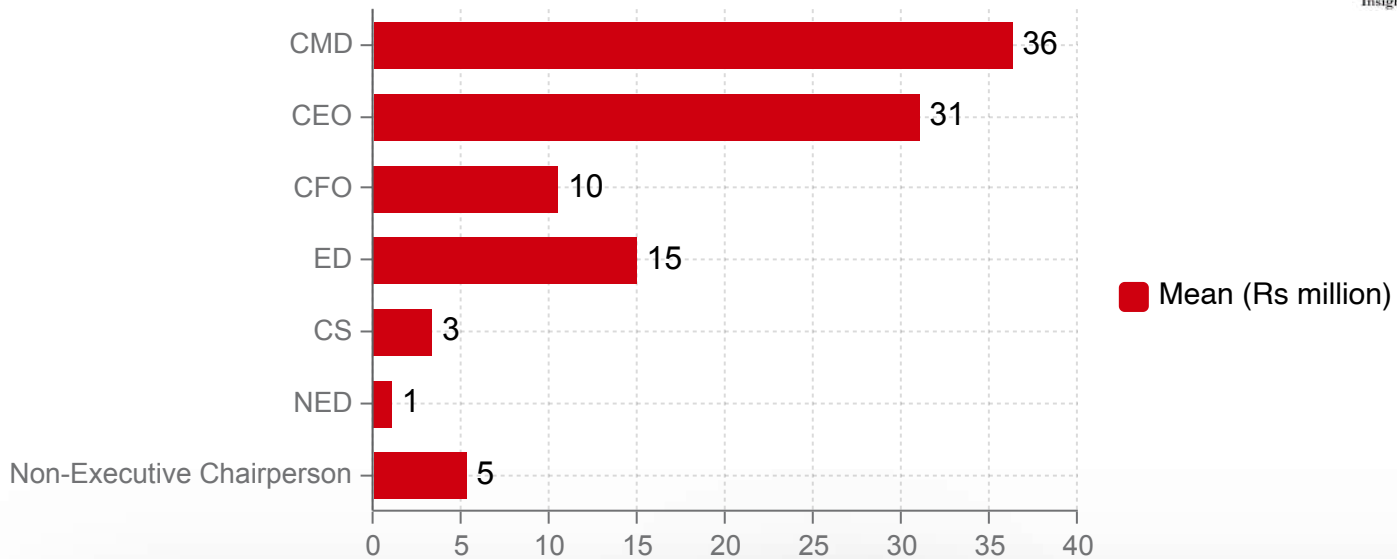
IMA

A solid gray vertical bar runs down the left side of the page, starting from the bottom of the yellow block and extending to the bottom of the page.

IMA India Research Update
May 2021

**BEST PRACTICES IN
EMPLOYER BRANDING**

Board Compensation



The 2020 Executive & Board Remuneration Report

Analyses trends in Board compensation and pay structure

Featuring several enhancements over the 2019 edition

Trends in board remuneration | Segment and sector-wise compensation benchmarks | Board composition | Board independence | Gender analysis

- Members of IMA's Forums receive a special discounted rate
- Companies that purchased last year's report: 20% discount

**To purchase a copy,
[click here](#)**



BEST PRACTICES IN EMPLOYER BRANDING

Employer branding has always been a key mandate for winning brands, all the more so in a post-Covid world. According to a recent LinkedIn survey, 80% of hiring managers bank on a strong employer brand to hire key talent. Irrespective of the company's hiring strategy, the behaviours it displays and how it positions itself in an increasingly-virtual world goes a long way in influencing its EVP (employee value proposition). This paper attempts to explore the best practices around employer branding by collating insights from several CHROs and via secondary research.

EVPs MATTER – A LOT

How important is your EVP?

It perhaps goes without saying that a strong EVP helps differentiate brands from their competitors. However, even with the broad umbrella of an 'overall employer brand', companies must tailor their messaging to highlight the factors that appeal to specific audiences and a multigenerational workforce. For instance, tech workers are more likely than sales-persons to care about how IT-savvy a company is. Millennials and Gen-Zs are drawn more by non-monetary benefits and the idea of working for a socially-responsible company than are Gen Xs. Deloitte's 2020 Global Millennial Survey finds that Indian millennials are concerned, above all, about climate change, and for many younger workers, CSR opportunities are a big draw. Ultimately, a robust and adaptable EVP – one that transforms with the ever-changing needs of the workforce – can help secure long-term recruitment, foster competitive differentiation and build a successful employer brand. Tellingly, most of the world's 'great places to work' invest critical resources and technology in their employer brands.

Employees can be the most valuable brand ambassadors

THE MANY FACETS OF A WINNING EMPLOYER BRAND

In a world that is connected 24/7/365, an organisation's consumer brand increasingly overlaps with its employer brand. Winning employer brands were the first to realise that a well-nurtured, engaged and empowered workforce comprises its best brand ambassadors. Industrial behemoth **Siemens** successfully changed its image as an 'old world' business by investing in clean, renewable energy and in smarter, more intuitive workplace infrastructure. Its 'Siemens 360°' app leverages virtual reality (VR) to share the stories and experiences of its employees around the world. Meanwhile, German luxury carmaker **Mercedes-Benz** has built a strong employer brand through intense collaboration between HR and marketing. While customising its EVP, it has incorporated key marketing insights as well as automation and digitisation. Like Siemens, it uses VR to offer prospective talent an 'inside view' of its workplaces, without having to visit its facilities.

HR and marketing can collaborate to build the employer brand

Retaining employees by offering them meaningful projects

In addition to perks that are becoming par-for-the-course at many companies – free food, laundry and fitness training – **Google India** gives its people the option to work on passion projects. In

fact, in employer-review pages, most Googlers say that the opportunity to engage in ‘meaningful and challenging projects’ is a key retention factor for them. Similarly, a strong CSR initiative has helped FMCG major **ITC** rise up the ranks of the best places to work in India. Within its e-Choupal project – which is primarily a rural knowledge-sharing and e-Commerce platform – ITC has distributed internet-enabled computers to multiple villages across the country.

Combining the strengths of a legacy company with the energy of a start-up

A few years ago, **Microsoft** abandoned its 30-year-old brand mission of ‘Putting a PC on every desk in every home, around the world’ in favour of ‘Empower[ing] every individual and every organisation on the planet to achieve more.’ This translates into a fresh, new employer brand motto: ‘Be the one who empowers millions.’ Consistent with this messaging, Microsoft has managed to avoid the bureaucratic traps that afflict many legacy companies. Its people enjoy an innovative and fast-paced environment where they can work in small and agile groups that have the look-and-feel of a start-up.

Meanwhile, **Sony** has built an employer brand around its mission of ‘Inspiring and fulfilling curiosity among its customers and employees.’ It offers an innovative culture that welcomes failure as part of the creative process. Employees have the license to keep refining an idea until they achieve a breakthrough, something that is often not possible at smaller start-ups.

Recruiting and engaging talent via social media...

REDEFINING RECRUITMENT AND TALENT ENGAGEMENT

Understanding social media channels, engagement and target messaging has become an increasingly important element of employer branding. IT major **SAP’s** ‘Life at SAP’ YouTube channel allows current and prospective employees to learn about the company’s culture, its open positions for recruitment, a view of its work environment as well as connect with peers across the globe. The channel contains experience-sharing videos of SAP employees and hosts company-wide events.

About 20 years ago, electronics manufacturer **Philips** redesigned its recruitment programme around a more proactive approach. Research from its internal and external focus groups revealed that many prospective employees lacked a full understanding of Philips’ range of products and service offerings. By identifying this and other problem areas, it reworked its messaging and communication, redefining its entire recruitment process and candidate experience.

...investing in technology...

Pharmaceutical giant **Merck** has recently set up a global talent sourcing team that focuses not only on recruitment, but also on long-term engagement with talent that might be recruited in the future. Such sourcing efforts often demand significant HR

technology investments, in areas such as talent profiling and engagement.

*...and promoting
relatable content*

In a similar vein, American technology MNC **Dell's** content strategy is aligned to its EVP and talent acquisition objectives. In several of its key markets – including Brazil, Mexico and Panama – the company hires local interns who dedicate 25-50% of their time to social media recruitment efforts. They are given access to Photoshop and Sprinklr (a social-media management platform), allowing them to create and publish content that attracts talent. Additionally, Dell has set up sub-accounts on Twitter (e.g., @DellPanama and @CarreiraDell) and geo-targets its content (in native languages) via its 'Careers at Dell' Facebook pages. Its Facebook page regularly churns out 'MondayMotivation' quotes and highlights employee engagement activities from offices around the world. One of its recent posts contained pictures of Dell's Hyderabad team spending time with residents at a home for the disabled. By strengthening its content strategy, it was able to create a deeper and locally-relatable connection to the employer brand.

EMPLOYER BRANDING IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

*Staying true to one's
EVP during a crisis*

Businesses that stay true to their EVP even during challenging times are the ones that retain – or earn – the most enduring customer and employee loyalty. The pandemic has brought forth the very best – and in a few cases, the worst – of employer brand management. Even as the slowdown forced businesses to close down or to retrench workers, some organisations managed to demonstrate care and empathy in managing these difficult transitions.

*Going above and
beyond to boost
employee morale...*

Online travel and hospitality major **Airbnb** was forced to lay off 25% of its workforce last year. All the while, its Chief Executive, Brian Chesky maintained full transparency, sending out a highly personal letter to his employees describing the company's finances and the reasons behind the layoffs. Furloughed workers were offered generous severance pay, continued health coverage through 2020, and were even allowed to retain their company-issued laptops. Airbnb also partnered with placement agencies and alumni portals to offer outgoing workers support in their job searches.

*... and gain people's
confidence*

Consumer goods conglomerate **Samsung** also had its fair share of challenges in 2020. However, it found innovative ways to connect with its customers and employees. During the first wave of the pandemic, it pledged nearly USD 2.7 million to India's PM CARES fund and to state-government initiatives. Keeping with the times, it launched several apps and products, like a Galaxy Smartwatch app that reminds users to wash their hands; a UV steriliser-cum-wireless-charger and anti-microbial phone cases.

Managing post-Covid employee expectations

Clearly, Covid-19 has forced employers to re-think 'how and where' work gets done and normalised the 'remote work' culture. This has had a tremendous impact on corporate cultures, and may, in the longer term, require many businesses to restructure their operational protocols and employee benefits. **SAP** used its internal employee pulse surveys and workshops, conducted an external survey and benchmarking analysis to identify the UVPs (unique value propositions) that motivate and retain its employees. The most important of these, it found, are the company culture of enabling innovation and adaptability; its global reach and impact; diversity, work-life balance, learning and development, and the fact that SAP respects employees as individuals and professionals. Its people feel inspired working in a diverse and challenging environment that offers them both autonomy and purpose driven work that 'helps the world run better and improve people's lives.'

Navigating the grey areas in employer branding

SOCIAL MEDIA: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Businesses must tread carefully while using social media to build or strengthen their employer brand. Certain online touch-points are more directly under the company's control: job listings, websites, blogs, candidate communication, and write-ups on one's culture and corporate values. Mostly, though, a company's social media presence is exposed to and shaped by public perception. Multiple portals contain employment reviews, employee stories, customer experiences and – critically – the social media activity of employees. Any negative sentiment can very quickly dent the consumer brand and – soon enough – the employer brand, too. Countering this demands that the organisation remain transparent in its hiring practices; focused on leadership development; and open and communicative with its people. In the final analysis, there is no substitute for authenticity – and it is businesses that lead with transparency and remain authentic to their core values that will stand the test of time.

This paper has been produced by IMA's in-house research team based on desk research and conversations with CHROs. It is meant for the exclusive consumption of IMA's Peer Group Forum members and may not be copied, shared or distributed without explicit permission. Please visit www.ima-india.com to view current papers and our full archive of content in the IMA members' Knowledge Centre, accessible via the Login link on top of the page. A podcast version of this paper is also available here. IMA Forum members have personalised website access codes.