

# HR, the makeover specialist

Organisations and their managers, say experts, are undergoing an image makeover. And the sole responsibility of this very endeavour is bestowed upon the modern-day 'image management executive' - the HR manager, discovers **Yasmin Taj**

Organisations today aim towards creating and maintaining a certain image and brand value for themselves. It is this very image of the organisation and its people that makes it an 'employer brand'.

According to Pragma Kumar, HR head, Yatra.com, "Brand management has become the primary tool for creating differentiation, establishing an emotional connect with the customers, creating perceptions and building customer loyalty."

Sunder Madakshira, VP - marketing and communications, SAP Labs India, expresses, "A lack of differentiation and proliferation of technology in a highly connected and hyper-competitive world ensures that customers have many options - sometimes so many that they find it hard to choose. Good brand management will always stay in

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vogue."

Therefore, why has the HR manager been entrusted with the key responsibility of brand/image management? "The HR team is like an imperative cog in an organisation's wheel. Brand building, on the other hand, is another cog. This brings to the fore the need for HR to shoulder brand management activities, in a quest to attain organisational excellence," he adds.

According to Madakshira, "Recruitment advertising, campus branding, thought leadership programmes, etc facilitate recruitment branding. All employee communication around leadership, HR process, etc are a manifestation of the other three. For this func-



### KRAs OF THE NEW IMAGE MANAGER:

- 1 Create differentiation;
- 2 Establish emotional connect;
- 3 Create perceptions;
- 4 Exercise recruitment branding;
- 5 Create an employment proposition;
- 6 Align employees with the brand.

tion to be performed effectively, the HR function needs to internalise the brand w.r.t identity, positioning, value proposition, differentiators, customer feedback and involvement very well. It then needs to find ways of articulating it to the internal and external world." "Customer loyalty is usually assessed under the famous 'Four Ps': product, place,"

promotion and price. Recently, marketers have realised that there is an important fifth 'P' in the marketing mix as well - people," asserts Abhijit Das, head - marketing, Delhi Duty Free. He believes that HR contributes immensely to strong reputation building by stimulating positive perceptions that employees have of their psychological contract (in terms of commitment, security, career opportunity, pay and employability) and being an employer of choice and creating an employment proposition." He concludes, "HR can therefore contribute to reputation management by creating a strong 'employer brand' that is consistent with all the other branding activities of the company."

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