
CHAPTER 2

Formation of employer's image for representatives of Generation Z in the retail sector in conditions of instability

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Abstract

Employer brand is considered as an image that a company builds to attract and retain talented staff and due to which it is known and valued in the labor market by job candidates. The employer brand is also seen as a part of the corporate brand, and together they create a synergistic effect in the company's activities. Positioning of the employer brand for Generation Z representatives is seen as a strategic process of creating and maintaining a unique and defined image of the company in the eyes of potential and current job seekers, taking into account age, behavioral, professional and economic indicators. The portrait of Generation Z representative as a target audience for the formation of employer brand is defined. A typification of the incentives of employer's value proposition for Generation Z representatives is proposed, namely: are focused on personal development, ensuring the competitiveness of the enterprise, requirements for the corporate culture of the company, the functionality of work and workplace, and material incentives. The process of forming the employer brand for companies in the retail sector which is divided into three main stages is proposed: analysis of the current situation, creation of the image of the desired employer brand, activation of steps to achieve the desired goals and their support. To assess the current state of the employer brand, it is proposed to use the metrics of reducing staff turnover in a certain period, analyzing the reasons for dismissal during the exit interview, converting the number of targeted questionnaires and the

eNPS methodology. To analyze the eNPS, a list of questions for the survey of retail chain employees has been developed. The employer brand development strategy for Generation Z consists of updating the brand book, communication strategy, and action plan to create the desired employer image among talents. The peculiarity of this strategy is the adaptation of each component to the requirements of the generation of buzzers.

The directions of forming the employer brand development strategy are recruitment, employee experience, and company talent management. For each area, metrics are proposed, the achievement of which determines the level of attractiveness of the employer brand. Indicators of the employer brand development strategy are the increase in the number of candidates for one position, % of employed candidates, reduction in the time to close a vacancy, reduction in the % of dismissed employees, increase in the level of job satisfaction in the company and increase in the number of promoted employees during the first year.

Keywords

Brand, employer brand, vacancy, employees, employment, value proposition, brand positioning, Generation Z, employer brand development strategy, employer brand process, retail.

2.1 Introduction

The forming of employer brand is of great importance in today's market environment, as it affects the way a company attracts and retains attention and interacts with its employees. According to forecasts, by 2030, a deficit between supply and demand in the labor market of 85 million specialists is expected in the world [1]. That is why, in the context of competition for limited resources in the labor market, the issue of creating an attractive employer brand arises. A strong employer brand makes a company more attractive to talented professionals. A positive employer brand also helps to retain the current team and attract new talented professionals. If employees are convinced that they work for a company with a good reputation, they are more likely to stay and invest in their development. Companies with a strong employer brand have a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining the best talent. This is especially important in industries where competition for talented employees is intense.

Students and recent graduates, who are representatives of Generation Z, require special attention when hiring. The younger generation is prioritized for hiring for several reasons, including fresh knowledge and skills, flexibility and adaptability

to new technologies or working methods, long-term job prospects, energy, digital skills, and a high level of use of digital technologies and the Internet. However, young people prioritize their own interests and goals over work, and pay great attention to mental health and financial well-being. As a result, there is the need to develop theoretical and methodological provisions for creating the employer brand that is attractive to young people.

2.2 The essence of the employer brand

The theoretical provisions related to the content of the employer brand, the relationship between the corporate brand and the employer brand, and the general principles of employer brand management have been studied by many scholars, including S. Tsymbaliuk [2], S. Mokina [3], T. Bilorus, S. Firsova [4], L. Stepanova, O. Tuzhytkina [5], O. Khytra [6], T. Vonberg, S. Dmitruk, Y. Zubova [7], O. Dragan, O. Solomka, L. Maznyk [8], C. J. Halvorsen, E. Emmanuel [9], J. Macalik, A. Sulich [10], K. Tanwar, A. Prasad [11] and others. In the conducted studies, almost no attention was paid to the employer brand for students and graduates of educational institutions. The scientific works of L. Löffler, C. Giebe [12], K. Gomez, T. Mawhinney, K. Betts [13], E. Jones [14], E. Seemiler, M. Grace [15] considered the importance of studying Generation Z as a target audience in the labor market. These scientific papers considered the current achievements of Zoomers, their characteristics and role in the future development of companies, taking into account technological innovation changes. However, there is the need in studying approaches to create attractive employer brand for young people, which is the basis for the company's development and increase its competitiveness.

S. Tsymbaliuk [2] considers the employer brand as an emotionally entertaining image of the enterprise that arises in the process of interaction of people with the enterprise and is determined by a set of unique characteristics that distinguish the company from others in the labor market. S. Mokina [3] considers the employer brand as a purposeful set of company qualities that determine the benefits of the company's employment conditions for the target audience. T. Belorus and S. Firsova [4] consider the employer brand as a reputation or image of the company aimed at attracting and retaining qualified employees. L. Stepanova and O. Tuzhytkina [5] define the employer brand as a set of economic, professional and psychological benefits that the employee receives by joining to the enterprise, as well as a way for management to define the identity of its business and communicate it to stakeholders. O. Khytra [6] considers two levels of the employer brand:

the first level, at which the employer brand interacts with the staff brand, and the second level of the set of HR brands of enterprises that have common industry specifics, are united by intra-industry ties and are dependent on the situation in the industry labor market. T. Vonberg, S. Dmytruk and Y. Zubova [7] consider the employer brand to be a reflection of the corporate brand, but in the labor market. They believe that marketing tools and communication policy for brand formation when working with the target audience are similar for the formation of the company's corporate brand and the employer brand. O. Dragan, O. Solomka and L. Maznyk [8], consider the employer brand of food industry enterprises, determine its relationship with corporate social responsibility, financial stability of the company and the company's stability in the market. C. J. Halvorsen and E. Emmanuel [9] consider the employer brand as a level of company reputation that determines the candidate's intention to be employed. J. Macalik and A. Sulich [10] note that the employer brand demonstrates the employee's loyalty to the company, and this is determined, among other things, by the company's involvement in sustainable development, its principles of corporate social responsibility and the level of development of corporate culture. L. Löffler and C. Giebe [12] consider the employer brand as a set of components of its value proposition, corporate culture and the level of competitiveness of the company.

L. Stepanova and O. Tuzhylnkina [5], K. Tanwar and A. Prasad [11] and S. Tsymbaliuk [2] define the external and internal context of the employer brand, which differ in purpose, goals, audience, HR management tools, communications and results. The target audience of the external employer brand is potential employees and job seekers, while the internal employer brand is the existing employees.

The internal context of the employer brand is aimed at retaining and developing the company's employees, forming the company's own qualified specialists. It involves monitoring compliance with labor laws, compliance of working conditions and remuneration with the employment contract, transparency and flexibility of the compensation policy, career and professional development, and employment guarantees. The external context of the employer's brand is aimed at creating an attractive image to attract potential candidates for vacancies in accordance with the established requirements.

According to the Rating of The Best Employers in Ukraine 2020–2021 [16], the employer brand includes the company's stability in the market, financial solvency, corporate culture (mission and values), social responsibility, and the attractiveness of goods and services offered by the company.

The employer's brand is formed in the labor market every time a company contacts the candidate: advertising on social media, job descriptions on job search sites,

a conversation with the recruiter, or the employee's feedback on a portal. The clearer the message conveyed by the employer, the more recognizable and competitive the company is.

The employer brand evokes associations among target candidates about the company and the desire to develop a career there. But this image evokes both positive and negative emotions and is constantly compared by candidates with other companies in the labor market.

Summarizing the approaches to defining the employer brand [2–15], the following characteristic features have been identified:

1. A set of characteristics and emotions that are associated with the company's employees and potential candidates and distinguish it from other employers in the labor market.
2. Financial stability of the company.
3. The company's reputation.
4. A list of tangible and intangible incentives aimed at creating a positive image of the company among the target audience.
5. The company's communication policy for recruiting staff.
6. Corporate culture (strategic vision, mission, values).
7. Competitiveness of the company's products and the company as a whole.
8. Social responsibility of the company.
9. Two-level structure: internal (for company employees) and external (for potential candidates).

Thus, the employer brand is seen as the image that a company builds to attract and retain talented staff and through which it is known and valued in the labor market by job candidates. It includes the company's reputation as the employer, work environment, company culture, tangible and intangible employee benefits, and attitude toward staff. The employer brand plays an important role in attracting and retaining talented employees, and influences their commitment and job satisfaction.

The employer brand is a component of the company's brand as a whole and determines its rating in the labor market. It is the part of the corporate culture, as it is aimed not only at external candidates (talent) but also at current employees. Both aspects of the brand, both the company and the employer, can interact with each other, creating a comprehensive image of the company in the eyes of both customers and employees.

The structure of the employer brand formation is shown in **Fig. 2.1**. This determines the existence of the complex and interconnected set of relations that arise at the enterprise in terms of various managerial influences on the employer brand.

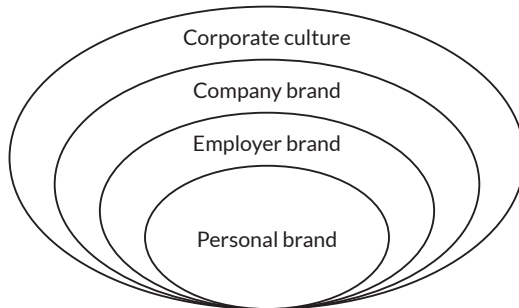


Fig. 2.1 Structural orientation of employer brand formation
Source: constructed by the authors

At the lowest level, let's consider the personal attitude of each employee to the employer brand, which is determined by his or her ethical position, the way he or she behaves and treats the company. Group behavior and the underlying organizational culture also influence the formation of the employer brand. In general, the employer brand is subordinated to the identity of the enterprise in the market of goods and services.

2.3 Employer brand content for Generation Z

To create the employer brand to attract Generation Z, it is necessary to understand the target audience. According to the Employer Branding Strategy 2021 study by Blu Ivy Group, 20 % of employees are Generation Z [14]. This is the largest and most attractive part of the labor market, as this generation is the future of the nation's development in each country. In addition, the share of Generation Z in the global labor market is increasing. Accordingly, employers should adapt their employer brand to the requirements of the new generation of candidates.

K. Gomez, T. Mawhinney and K. Betts [13] consider Generation Z as people who were born between 1995 and 2012, E. Jones [14] considers this generation between 1996 and 2015.

K. Gomez, T. Mawhinney and K. Betts [13] note that in order to attract the attention of Generation Z, companies and employers need to demonstrate their commitment to a broader set of social challenges, such as sustainability, climate change, and hunger.

Generation Z is growing up in the era of rapid technological development, so they have a high level of technological literacy, they are supporters of digital

technologies and the use of the Internet, own several digital gadgets (phone, laptop, tablet, etc.), and are able to quickly adapt to new technologies. E. Jones [14] notes that this generation does not distinguish between the physical and digital worlds. For them, a critical element is the ability to smoothly transition between them. Zoomers are changing consumer behavior due to their fluency with digital tools and formulating a new paradigm of digital experience.

Generation Z is characterized by the active use of social media, online communication, video games and other digital platforms, and a preference for bloggers' opinions on social media. They are accustomed to the speed and instantaneousness of information and communication. They have a tendency to creative expression and actively use social media to create their own image, express their thoughts and ideas.

According to the study of E. Jones [14], Generation Z is the most dependent on the Internet and social media compared to other generations: 58 % of them cannot help but use the Internet for more than 4 hours; in 5 years, 64 % of Generation Z representatives believe that the Internet will determine what they do every day; 56 % of Generation Z representatives are friends with those they know only online.

Imran Anwar Mir and Jari Salo consider the direct impact of social networks on the level of attractiveness of the employer's brand [18]. This indicates that it is appropriate to form and develop a brand for Generation Z on the social network Instagram, which is the most popular for learning and sharing information [19]. For Generation Z candidates, brand ambassadors or bloggers play an important role. Therefore, advertising the employer's brand through opinion leaders among the target audience on Instagram and other social networks is one of the most effective tools for communicating with candidates, especially those without work experience [20–22].

L. Löffler and C. Giebe [12] analyzed the theory of generations and its impact on the components and characteristics of the employer brand and determined that for Generation Z, mobility, multiple functions, the ability to work remotely and an individual approach from the manager are important when choosing a job.

Generation Z prefers work and study that allow them to develop their own brand and individual identity. They are looking for a job that aligns with their values and interests. Representatives of the younger generation are accustomed to change and fast pace of life, have a tendency to flexibility and mobility in work, study and life in general, and are characterized by a choice of hybrid or remote work formats. This is a certain level of freedom while working in a corporation. Remote work helps students to combine work and study.

Under the influence of the development of digital technologies, typical behavior for Zoomers is closeness to live meetings and the choice of online communication. The Zoomers are less brand loyal, but they are focused on brand authenticity.

A new trend in the labor market among young people is the choice to work in a startup or young company as opposed to international companies. The tech sector is a particularly interesting area of work for them.

The buzzer generation prioritizes their own financial well-being in life first and foremost. But some studies have shown that Generation Z values salary less than any other generation [13]. It is important for the employer to offer competitive salaries when recruiting for an internship or a job to the generation of buzzers.

Generation Z will demand more personalization in how they progress in their career path [13].

In line with the trends of the global economy, the buzzer generation did not come of age during the communist regime. This generation is living in a period of rise and leadership in the global economy of the United States and China.

Generalized portrait of Generation Z representatives based on four main characteristics: age, behavioral, professional indicators, and global economic trends that is shown in **Fig. 2.2**. However, there is no need to succumb to stereotypes, as Generation Z cannot be assigned a standard and then use it without changes.

<p>Age indicators born from 1995 to 2015</p>	<p>Behavioral indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proponents of digital communication than face-to-face meetings. They listen to the opinion of bloggers and social networks. Choose online education. Online shopping. Volunteering and social activities. Active use of social media. Fast pace of life. Commitment to the challenges of society 	<p>Professional indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed or remote work format. Priority of material well-being. Individual approach to work, personalization. Diversity and diversification of the functional. High level of technological literacy. Digital literacy. Ability to learn and retrain 	<p>Trends of the world economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. Internet distribution. After the communist regime. The USA and China occupy leading positions in the world economy
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Fig. 2.2 Portrait of representatives of Generation Z
 Source: summarized by [12-14, 17-22]

Thus, the employer brand for Generation Z is a set of characteristics and measures aimed at forming positive associations with the company among potential employees, taking into account the peculiarities of behavioral, psychological, economic and social views of this generation.

2.4 Employer brand value proposition

Each company independently determines its desired image for potential candidates. This is defined as the concept of employer value proposition (EVP) [23]. The list of characteristics of the value proposition is broken down into tangible and intangible benefits of the company for future and current employees.

It has been shown that EVP components directly affect the level of employee productivity, their loyalty to the employer, increase the value of fulfilling promises for employees and determine further communication in the company [24]. It also helps to increase the duration of work and retain talent in the company [25]. The economic impact for companies is reflected in 10 % reduction in labor costs, 25 % reduction in recruitment costs, and 28 % reduction in staff turnover [26].

A. Maslow [27] proposed a hierarchical system of human needs, according to which he ranked human needs by importance, namely: physiological needs, safety (health, life, future), social (friendship, family, intimacy), respect (self-esteem, confidence, achievement), self-expression (creativity, morality, problem solving). All of these needs should be reflected to some extent in the formation of the employer brand EVP.

The EVP employer brand should answer two main questions: "What does the offer mean to me as the employee or candidate?" and "What can your company offer more than others in the labor market?" P. Avinash and S. Kuldip Charak consider a value proposition to be a set of associations and tangible and intangible offers that employee will receive [28].

Growth-oriented companies need to determine how well their internal culture aligns with the values of those they want to see among their employees. If a company can clearly communicate its values, it will be able to attract employees who share them, and this will contribute to the company's development [26]. M. Tklich notes that EVP also determines the number of tasks for employees and their balance between work and personal time [29].

C. Seemiler and M. Grace [15] proposed the "Reward of Work" (ROW) model, which identifies the winning elements and processes of creating an attractive workplace. In particular, these are: compensation – material remuneration in the form of salary and additional payments; benefits – cash payments for health insurance, retirement and dismissal (at the request of the employee) from the company; job task component – satisfaction and level of employee involvement in the fulfillment of tasks and goals; career – professional development and prospects in the company; belonging – the level of employee involvement in the corporate culture and the formation of a favorable atmosphere in the company.

F. Huang, P. Liu, Yu. Si, L. Zhao, Z. Shi and X. Huang [30] consider the following components of the employer brand value proposition: career development opportunities, realization of personal value, corporate culture, material rewards, social responsibility and workspace.

Most researchers believe that the main components of the value proposition are the level of salary, additional benefits (health insurance, bonuses), career development in the company, the company's image as the employer, and a comfortable workplace.

Less important, but also influencing the choice of a future job, are: the company's business rating, employee training and development system, use of the latest technologies, company values, and the company's rating as the employer.

One of the advantages of working for a company is compliance with information security standards. This selection criterion is the least popular among employers, but it requires attention due to the electronic exchange of information. L. Maznyk and O. Dragan believe that the criteria for determining the effectiveness of compliance with information security standards are the number of security breaches, recovery time after breaches, the number of employees who have been trained in data protection, the number of viruses and malware [31].

N. Samoliuk, G. Mishchuk and V. Mishchuk [32] consider comfortable workplace, material incentives and additional material benefits, employer's rating in social networks, image, career development opportunities and use of the latest technologies to be important components of the employer's brand value proposition.

V. Oberemchuk and O. Degtyar [33] consider a wide range of components of the employer brand value proposition, among which, in addition to the previous list, they identify the opportunity to gain international experience, the availability of social projects, and a positive impact on the environment. E. Jones [16] also considers the presence of social projects as an important component of the employer brand value proposition.

S. Firsova and A. Kozhukhivska [34] also identify the company's training system, its capabilities and adaptation to environmental changes, and compliance with modern innovation challenges as an important component.

A. Jogola [35], characterizing the value proposition for the employer from the perspective of Generation Z, identifies the need for the employer to take care of the environment, not be tainted by gender-based outrages, and not infringe on anyone's rights. Zoomers want to hear a clear position that turns the employer into a friend who cares about the same issues and shares their values. It also suggests that the content of the products and services offered by the company on the market also affects the employer brand.

I. Volobaeva, O. Kravchuk and D. Warshava [36] believe that reviews about the company in social networks and on various portals are also important for attracting

staff. Generation Z primarily receives information from social networks and, based on this information, creates an image of the employer in their minds.

O. Dragan, O. Solomka and L. Maznyk [8] believe that the list of benefits of working in a company varies depending on the level of responsibility of the company's employee.

M. Dzhulai, I. Fedulova and I. Bolotina [37] define the need to take into account the possibility of working remotely or in a mixed format when determining the value proposition of the employer's brand.

Table 2.1 summarizes the attributes of the employer brand value proposition and defines the parameters of their management based on the results of the monographic analysis of scientific works.

Table 2.1 Employer brand value proposition attributes

A value proposition	Essence	Management parameters
1	2	3
Salary	Material motivation of employees in the amount of a monthly financial reward	Analysis of the labor market for relevant positions (below average level, average, above average level). Periodic revision of the size depending on the results of the employee or a certain period
Additional payments (premiums, bonuses)	Additional material motivation depending on the fulfillment of the set goals	KPI (Key Performance Indicator) system
Career development	Vertical or horizontal promotion of an employee in a company with a defined period and positions	Organizational structure of the company. Flexibility of powers
Work outside the office	Work outside the office	Software for the work of employees. The task control system
Flexible work schedule	Ability to combine study and work (for initial positions) or lack of fixed working hours in the company	KPI (Key Performance Indicator) system. Labor productivity
Training within the company	Ensuring continuous training and development as a qualified specialist within the company	Building a career path within the company. Evaluation of the level of competence of employees
Official employment	Activities of the employment company in accordance with the labor legislation of the country	Reliability and stability for employees. A sense of security. Official employment and salary issuance

Continuation of Table 2.1

1	2	3
The impact of business on the environment	How the company's activities affect the environment and public health	What UN sustainable development goal does the company fulfill, performance in 1 year
New projects and tasks of employees	Experience while working in a team: work on a large-scale project, international team, tasks	Development of practical skills of employees
Technology of the company's processes	Digitization of processes within the company	The speed and efficiency of the company's operational processes
Security	How does the company take care of the safety of the workplace and the employee within the company and beyond	The level of occupational health and safety, availability of shelter
Company image	The company's reputation as an employer, the company's rating according to a certain criterion	Place in the company's ranking (market share, cash turnover, amount of tax payments, etc.)
Social responsibility	The company's activities to support different segments of the population	Amount of material assistance; availability of social programs
Team	Qualification level and age of employees	Support of equality and inclusiveness in the team, opportunity for development and exchange of experience
Corporate culture	Company values, work principles, behavior models, communication within the team	Adequacy of the chosen culture. Common interests of the team. Adaptability of culture
Events for company employees	Internal company events for employees to support relationships and communication	The level of job satisfaction of employees in the company. Corporates, team building, etc.
Medical Insurance	Medical care for employees during sick leave	Availability of medical insurance

Source: improved by [23–38]

In view of this, the main components of the value proposition have economic, emotional and functional characteristics.

The employer brand value proposition also focuses on internal customers – employees. Employees themselves have an impact on the formation of the company's values. High-quality interaction between employer and employee is the alignment between the desired and actual level of EVP. Satisfaction feedback is obtained using the following tools: anonymous audience survey, exit interviews with dismissed employees, and analysis of trends in the employer market [38].

Typification of the employer's value proposition incentives is shown in **Fig. 2.3**.

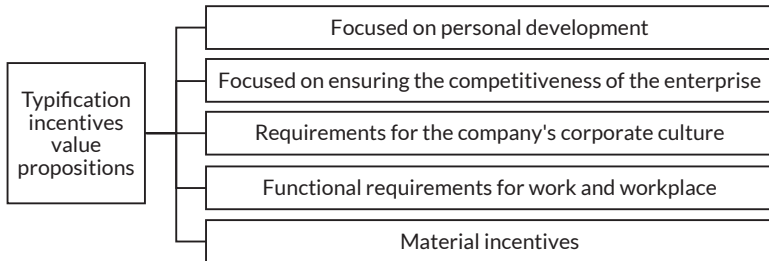


Fig. 2.3 Typing incentives of the employer's value proposition
Source: constructed by the authors

Financial incentives are one of the most important factors in choosing a job. These include: salary level that should be compared with the labor market and competitive, official employment, additional benefits and compensation. These include health insurance, maternity leave for both men and women, retirement benefits, performance bonuses, partial or full coverage of gym memberships, and enrollment of employees' children in school or kindergarten.

Value propositions focused on personal development include opportunities for employee training and development, international experience, and career development. These values are often the first priority when choosing a first job or gaining experience.

The company's image as the employer, the company's rating as the employer, the company's business rating, and the products/services the company creates are value propositions focused on ensuring the company's competitiveness. The higher the company's rating, the more attractive the employer is to job seekers.

Work schedule, work-life balance, use of the latest technologies, creativity/design of the office, office location, comfortable workplace are requirements for the functionality of the job and workplace. This type of value proposition is partially losing its relevance in the context of remote work, as most companies have been working remotely due to the COVID-19 epidemic and now due to the war. Thus, the usual 9 to 18 hours work schedule is no longer an advantage. The priority for company leaders is to fulfill their tasks and achieve goals by their employees.

The requirements for corporate culture include the company's values, which relate to the formation of relationships between all employees of the company and are determined by the behavior of each member. This is manifested in the company's attitude to society, which can be manifested in the presence of social projects.

Each international company chooses one or more UNICEF Sustainable Development Goals. Nowadays, candidates are looking not only for the most attractive salary option, but also for the employer with common goals and values. This is especially true for Generation Z, for whom volunteering and addressing environmental and social issues are important in their daily lives.

The employer brand value proposition for Generation Z is the ecosystem of support, recognition and values that exist in the company to achieve the highest level of professional development of employees and potential candidates and which is aimed at achieving the company's strategic goals. It is a key element of employer brand management aimed at attracting and retaining talented professionals.

To study the employer brand, a survey of young people was conducted in 2021 and 2022. The full-scale war in Ukraine is a key macroeconomic factor influencing students' choice of future employment since 2022. The total number of respondents is 1332. According to the field of study, the audience of the surveyed students was distributed as follows: 51.9 % – social sciences (business, law, economics, management, sociology, etc.); 15.59 % – technical sciences (engineering, metallurgy, mechanical engineering, etc.); 17.95 % – exact sciences (cybernetics, computer science, mathematics, etc.); 9.45 % – humanities (history, philosophy, etc.); 6.61 % – natural sciences (geography, physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, etc.).

The majority of students at the time of the full-scale invasion in 2022 had no work experience in the company (50.39 %). Almost 31 % of respondents have up to 1 year of internship experience, so they are familiar with the selection processes for entry-level positions and are able to evaluate the employer's brand more objectively. Almost 30 % of students have 1 to 3 years of experience in companies. 20.63 % have more than 3 years of work experience.

In 2021, the top 5 most attractive components of the employer brand value proposition for Generation Z representatives were company training, salary, official employment, internship schedule, and the company's business rating and reputation.

In 2022, the most important factor for students was the level of salary, due to the economic and labor crisis in Ukraine. The internship schedule remained in the TOP 5 criteria for choosing future employer, but moved up to the second position in the ranking. This is primarily due to the migration of candidates abroad or to the western part of Ukraine. Accordingly, due to the safety of employees in the first year of the full-scale war, most employers were engaged in the relocation of employees and opened offices in cities with the largest presence of employees. Secondly, the absence of the need to visit the office expanded the ability of recruiters to reach the target audience of candidates without reference to their place of residence. As the result, the ability to work remotely took the fourth position in the ranking in 2022.

In 2022, the company's training ranked the third place instead of first one. The training and development system is one of the tools to retain employees during the crisis. Accordingly, it is an important component of the employer's value proposition. Official employment remains in the top 5 factors in choosing future employer. It is important for candidates to support the state budget by paying taxes. This is one of the factors for checking the employer's reputation and compliance with labor laws. Important factors for students when choosing a future job are the company's withdrawal from the Russian market and the company's support of the Armed Forces and/or humanitarian aid (Fig. 2.4).

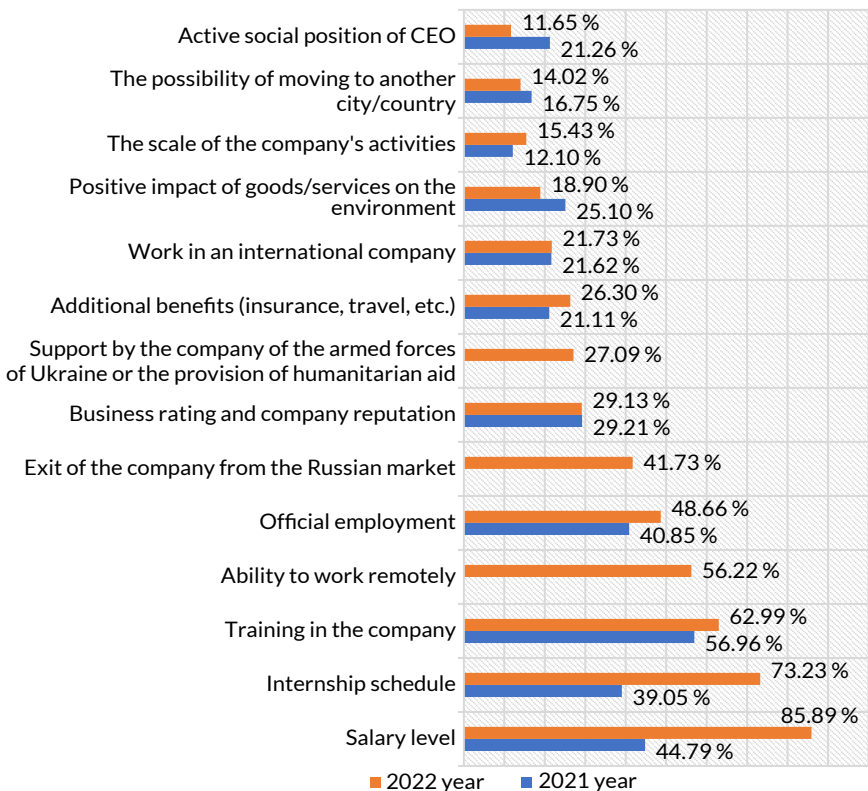


Fig. 2.4 Comparison of the level of significance of the components of the value proposition when choosing a future workplace by representatives of Generation Z in 2022 and 2021, % of surveyed respondents

Source: calculated based on survey results

The patriotic consciousness of students is manifested at all levels of job search. Candidates refuse to consider vacancies or internships if the company is involved in the Russian market or has hidden influence. To check the integrity of the company, students use official sources and company statements on the website of the global office.

2.5 Employer branding process

Organizing the process of forming the employer brand helps to create a strategy and justify actions to positively represent the company in the labor market. It also includes defining the company's values, developing a culture of employee support, active communication with the public, and improving the work environment.

The process of forming the employer brand for Generation Z representatives can be divided into three main stages: analyzing the current situation, creating an image of the desired employer brand, activating steps to achieve the desired goals and supporting them (Fig. 2.5).

The first stage of the employer brand forming process involves determining the current state of the company's value proposition, image, and brand.

It is advisable to determine the current state of the value proposition by the state of development of the components of the employer brand value proposition. Thus, companies can determine which value propositions are in the best condition and which need to be developed. Such analysis allows identifying the problems of forming the employer brand for Generation Z representatives.

It is also advisable to analyze what is effective and valuable for employees, what should be abandoned, and identify problems and opportunities for development. To do this, it is necessary to assess the current state of employer brand performance indicators in the retail network, office and their dynamics.

To analyze the employer brand in the retail sector, it is advisable to analyze important indicators in the context of companies as a whole, individual employees, and the retail network. These include, in particular, the following:

1. *Staff turnover in the first month of employment, quarter, year.* It is advisable to pay attention to the dynamics of changes in the indicator. The higher the percentage change in this indicator, the more attention should be paid to the reasons for this change.
2. *Reasons for leaving during the exit interview.* To collect answers, it is recommended to use a short online survey form with options that the employee receives on the last working day and a place for comments or feedback. The answers should be considered in the context of the company's performance.

3. Conversion of the number of targeted questionnaires of employed employees. The higher the conversion rate, the more attractive the employer is in the labor market and the strategy of forming the employer brand is correct. A low conversion rate indicates that the employer is unattractive and that its value proposition is not competitive with other employers.

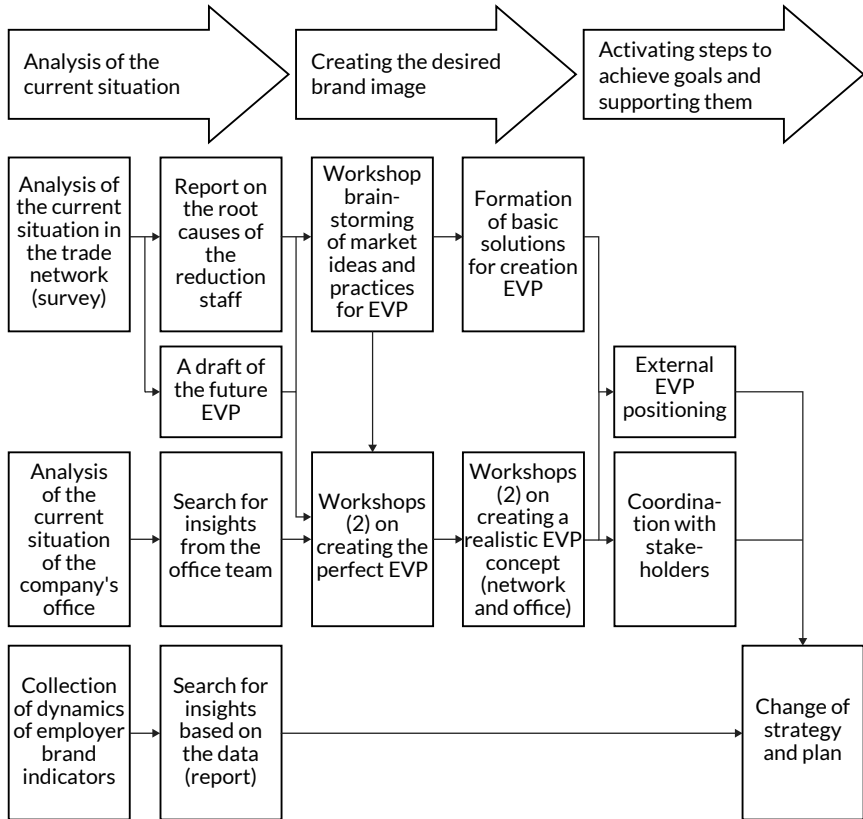


Fig. 2.5 The process of forming the employer brand
 Source: constructed by the authors

This analysis also includes the report about the main causes of employee departures that have been voiced. After analyzing the responses of office employees,

we search for insights that will help to identify unexpected problems among the components of the employer's brand from the employee's side and determine their impact on the retail network. Based on the results of this analysis, the report is created with the outlined needs for change.

The exit interview template for a retail chain employee should be concise. It is recommended to use automatic SMS notifications for dismissed employees on the last working day to reduce the involvement of recruiters. The list of questions for the exit interview may be as follows:

1. Why did you decide to leave our company (multiple choice):
 - I want to receive a higher salary.
 - Insufficient or no opportunities for career development in the company.
 - Difficult or uncomfortable working conditions.
 - I want to develop my career in another specialty.
 - It is difficult to form a work schedule.
 - Other (open answer).
2. Are you considering another job?
 - No.
 - If "yes", please indicate the criteria for choosing a future job:
 - a) format and schedule of work;
 - b) career development with international experience;
 - c) the level of salary;
 - d) the company's rating as the employer;
 - e) social projects of the company;
 - f) the possibility of moving to another city/country;
 - g) business rating of the company;
 - h) creativity/design of the office, comfortable workplace;
 - i) reviews about the company on various portals;
 - j) office location (distance from the place of residence);
 - k) additional benefits (insurance, meals, transportation, etc.)
 - l) official employment;
 - m) products/services created by the company;
 - n) company values;
 - o) the company's image as the employer;
 - p) the company's training and development system.
3. Would you recommend working in our company?
 - Yes.
 - More yes than no.
 - No.

4. Any comments and suggestions to improve the work in our company.

The answers to the questions will help HR managers to improve the employee experience and reduce the level of staff turnover in the retail chain.

The second stage of the employer branding process is to create the desired employer brand image. To create the desired image of the employer brand, it is possible to determine the deviation between the existing ranking of value propositions for each company and the desired one from the point of view of Generation Z representatives.

This stage involves holding workshops by the team of HR managers to search for ideas and learn best practices in HR management. It is necessary to organize workshops aimed at improving, developing or creating new components of the EVP and eliminating unnecessary elements. As the result, the basic formation of solutions for creating the updated EVP emerges.

For retail companies, it is typical to divide employees into office and network (store or outlet) employees. At this stage, it is necessary to identify problems in brand management and determine the established image of the employer among the target audience (or find out that it is absent). To do this, it is advisable to use the collection of results of the employer brand performance over the past year in general and in the context of each outlet in the network, conducting the employee survey and analyzing competitors.

To identify problems in the formation of the employer brand, it is advisable to use *the method of assessing employee loyalty (eNPS)*. It determines the likelihood that the employee will recommend the company as a place of work and helps the HR department understand what employees like or dislike about the company at the moment [39].

This index can be used to quantify the willingness of employees to recommend working for the company to their family, friends, etc. in the long term. The frequency of the index assessment is usually 2–4 times a year. The company's employees are divided into 3 categories: scores of 1–6 – do not recommend, 7–8 – neutral attitude to the company, 9–10 – brand ambassadors.

The calculation is based on the formula:

$$\text{eNPS} = \text{Share of brand ambassadors (\%)} - \text{Share of employees who do not recommend working in the company (\%)}$$

The scale is used to analyze the results:

- 0–60 – low level, employees do not recommend the employer;
- 70–80 – a sufficient level of commitment to the employer;
- 90–100 – the level of loyalty corresponds to the level of labor market leaders.

The following principles are recommended for conducting the survey to collect employee responses:

1. Anonymity. For truthful answers, each respondent must be confident in the confidentiality of the survey. To analyze retail companies in the context of the structural elements of the organization, it is recommended to add the number or name of the network location to the questionnaire.

2. Use the interactive platform to collect responses. The more gamified and interactive the questionnaire is for the target audience of respondents, the higher the percentage of employee engagement in answering and the larger the data sample for analysis.

3. Develop communication campaign among employees. In order to collect a sufficient number of responses (at least 70 %), it is recommended to use the survey announcement in several sources of communication in the company and reminders to provide answers. Internal communication tools for employees in companies may differ depending on the specifics of management activities, but the main ones are as follows: letter to corporate mail, an internal news platform, company news digest, chats or trading network group.

4. Taking into account the peculiarities of the company's activities requires an individual approach to brand management and analysis. Depending on the specifics of the company's activities and the formed value proposition, the list of questions differs.

The list of questions for a survey of retail chain employees using the eNPS methodology for retail employers should include the following questions:

1. *Employee attitude to work and assessment of the level of trust in the company as the employer:*

- How likely are you to recommend the company as a place to work to your friends or acquaintances?

- Do you intend to continue working for the company in the next 1-2 years?

2. *Employee's attitude to teamwork and direct supervisor:*

- Assess the extent to which your manager encourages you to make independent and prompt decisions for the business.

- Assess the level of effectiveness of interaction between the company's office team and the sales network.

- Do you agree with the statement that your manager makes decisions that are most appropriate for the company as a whole, not just for the retail chain? If not, please explain.

- Do you agree with the statement that everyone in the company has equal opportunities for career development?

- How comfortable are you with arguing and defending your opinion to a manager who has an opposing opinion?
- Do you consider the environment within your retail network team to be safe to provide feedback to each other?
- Do you feel that it is safe to express ideas to improve the performance of your job and the company as a whole?

3. Attitude to the company's value proposition:

- Rate the extent to which the company provides training for each employee.
- Evaluate the extent to which the company provides transparent and regular opportunities for your career development in the retail network.
- Rate the level of alignment with company values and their implementation in decision-making.
- Rate the level of satisfaction with your salary.
- Evaluate how comfortable and practical the workwear provided by the company is.
- Do you use the company's health insurance? If yes, please rate your level of satisfaction. If not, please explain why you refused.
- Please rate your satisfaction with the supplementary bonuses programs.
- Please rate the level of provision of necessary materials and resources at your workplace to achieve your work goals.

4. The level of belonging to the company as the employer and interaction within a large retail network:

- To what extent do you agree with the statement "It is easy for me to find all the information I need about company policies and processes for my job"?
- What extent do you agree with the statement "I feel that my work is valued within the network and the company as a whole"?
- To what extent do you agree with the statement "I feel that my contribution to the development of the company is important and ensures the smooth execution of processes in the sales chain"?
- To what extent do you agree with the statement "I feel that the office team and our sales chains work closely together"?
- To what extent do you agree with the statement "I clearly distinguish and understand what communication channels exist in the company and how to use them"?

It is recommended that at the end of the survey form you leave a place for wishes and any comments that the employee could make to improve their experience in the company.

It is also necessary to create the up-to-date portrait of retail and office employee. Characteristics of the portrait: age, gender, length of working time in the company,

work format, motivation. To do this, it is suggested to select at least 10 employers: direct competitors operating in the retail sector and indirect ones that hire a similar target audience.

The criteria for the study are as follows:

1. Requirements for candidates for employment: age, education, work experience, soft and hard skills, level of English language proficiency. For retail employers, the requirements for an entry-level position in retail chain are minimal: 18 years of age or older, work experience is optional.

2. Selection stages: online application form or feedback through job search sites, telephone interview, interview with a recruiter in the retail chain. For managerial positions, candidates are additionally evaluated using case studies, logic and number tests, and an interview with a manager.

3. The schedule and format of work is important for young people when choosing their first job, so we analyze the use of full-time or part-time work and the mode of work (remote/office/mixed).

4. Salary. To analyze this indicator, it is important to take into account not only the level of competitors' pay, but also the general trend of the labor market. For entry-level positions, hourly rates are in priority for candidates.

5. Non-financial motivation, which includes value propositions: insurance, training and development system in the company, opportunities to move to another city or country, etc.

6. Activities to build the employer brand among young people. These can include cooperation with higher education institutions in the format of dual education or internships, participation in career fairs, online or offline educational projects for young people, interactive questionnaires with a prize draw, etc.

7. Internships/leadership programs for young people. During these programs, students gain the necessary knowledge and skills and, after completing the program, are ready to receive the offer and take a position in the company or get management position.

8. Social media about careers. Building the employer brand in the online environment is essential. Most student candidates respond to online jobs through social media advertising and look for work on their own in Telegram channels. For candidates without work experience, we recommend actively developing the page on the social network Instagram.

We study the most successful examples of employer brand management of competitors, which, in our opinion, could be used to create our own employer brand.

To create an attractive employer brand, it is also advisable to interview employees and graduates of internship or work placement program (if the employer

has one). This approach creates opportunities to assess the value proposition and the brand in general at different levels of management. The optimal interview duration is 30 minutes. Factors that should be analyzed using open-ended questions include the employee's experience, work atmosphere, motivation, professional goals, and pain points for the employee. For each question, positive and negative indicators are identified to assess the level of engagement of the intern.

The first question is the analysis of the skills used by the intern during the internship period. Such skills are aimed at quick adaptation in the company, a structured internship program and the formation of a positive experience in the company. The next question is to analyze whether the planned description of responsibilities for the internship period and the number of tasks correspond to the actual level. The analysis of the workplace conditions during the internship in a retail chain is important criterion for assessing and deciding on further employment in the retail sector. To create a positive experience for employees, the employer must provide them with comfortable working conditions throughout the entire work cycle. This ensures the achievement of internship goals and the possibility of exceeding them. We analyze the advantages and disadvantages of working in the company based on the value propositions voiced by the intern. Upon completion of the internship, the intern makes a decision on further employment based on the overall impression of the company as the employer and the analysis of further prospects for career development in the retail chain.

After the interview, the level of the trainee's involvement in the internship is assessed based on the summation of the number of positive and negative indicators voiced by the trainee. Accordingly, the greater the prevalence of positive indicators over negative ones, the higher the level of the trainee's involvement. We believe that at least 80 % of positive indicators define the employer as desirable for employment after the internship and a high level of intern loyalty.

To create the image of a desirable employer brand, it is also advisable to conduct workshops using the Miro online interactive whiteboard tool. This is a convenient tool for quickly generating ideas and collecting market practices for solving employer branding problems. The workshop methodology is as follows: the moderator takes turns voicing the problems identified from the preliminary data analysis and gives 7 minutes for brainstorming. Each participant individually generates any ideas that could help solve the existing problems within 7 minutes and writes them down on online sticky notes. There is no limit to the number of ideas. The moderator monitors the time for the brainstorm and organizes all the ideas after the workshop.

Activation of steps to achieve the desired goals and their support is **the third and final stage** for the formation of updated value proposition and employer brand

positioning. At this stage, it is important to hold meetings with stakeholders to finalize the EVP for development. The format of the meeting is the presentation of the updated proposal and questions and answers. Once agreed, the strategy and plan for employer brand development is created. It is recommended to monitor the implementation of the planned results on a quarterly basis for a comprehensive review of the dynamics of employer brand performance indicators. We believe that if there is a positive change in the indicators, such as a decrease in staff turnover, an increase in the number of target candidates for one job, and a decrease in the number of reasons for dismissal, the strategy is being implemented successfully. The desired percentage change in indicators is determined at the planning stage.

2.6 Strategic directions of employer brand development

Implementation of successful strategy for forming the employer brand for young people should be based on the following components: updating the brand book, communication strategy, management action plan to create the desired image of the employer among talents (Fig. 2.6).

Component strategies of employer brand development		
Brand book	Communication strategy	Formation of the desired image of the employer

Fig. 2.6 Component strategies of employer brand development
Source: constructed by the authors

The employer's brand book is a structured document that includes:

- definition of the employer's business profile, mission, and strategic vision;
- description of the employer through the prism of indicators. Such indicators may include: the number of employees who have been promoted over the past year; place in the employer rating; number of interns who stay with the company, etc.;
- employer's value proposition: what is done for interns and students and how it is done;
- key messages to be used for advertising among target candidates or forming a certain image of the employer;
- visual design with the definition of mandatory elements to be observed (logo placement, colors, style, photos of employees, etc.);

- communication channels with the target audience;
- examples of advertising campaigns in various sources.

The description of the company as the employer should be clear and measurable. We recommend 4-5 sentences, which would include information about the company's activities, the scale of the employer (number of employees or office branches in the country or retail network, place in the employer rating), the employer's mission (broadcasting the main and unique value). The most common mistake made by HR professionals is a broad description of the company as the employer without defining a unique offer, focusing more on the company's activities than on the place it occupies for employees and interns.

The employer's value proposition is a list of tangible and intangible benefits of working for the company. For external and internal communication, it is customary to distinguish between a wide range of them, since not all advantages are criteria for choosing future job or, on the contrary, are significant for a student.

Typically, 3-5 key messages are used for advertising. These should be slogans or appeals to the target audience to pay attention and respond to the vacancy or internship that stimulate the candidate while viewing it. If several portraits of the target audience have been identified during the development of the updated employer brand, we create key messages for each of them accordingly. Key messages for the general audience, which are aimed more at shaping the image of the employer's brand in the labor market, are created based on their generalization.

Each employer develops different versions of visual design templates for materials depending on the sources of use.

The mandatory templates are:

- printed materials: printable banner for career recruitment events (job fairs at universities/colleges), stickers, hoodies, eco-shoppers, etc.;
- information messages on the Internet: website about career opportunities in the company, postings on job search sites, social media of the company as the employer, advertising on various online platforms. For students and recent graduates, we recommend advertising on Instagram and TikTok;
- placement on offline platforms: billboards or city lights in the city. It is recommended to use it only in small cities where there is a limited choice of companies for internships or first jobs.

The list of visual characteristics of the employer brand may differ from the general company brand used for consumers. However, it is not recommended to make the brands for candidates and consumers as opposite in color as possible, as the employer brand is a component of the company's brand. It is recommended to create several approaches to communication for young people: static and video for social media.

Communication channels for the target audience differ in the tools used to attract the candidate's attention (**Table 2.2**).

Table 2.2 Tools for communication between the candidate and the employer

Source of communication with candidate	Tool for formation employer brand
Printed materials on advertising space or in the company's retail network	Posters, billboards, banners, bigboards, city lights
Video	Advertising on YouTube or Instagram about an employee's working day, an interview with a manager or an intern
Social networks	Adapted advertising on various platforms: LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook
Offline events (career events at universities or job fairs)	A set of branded printed materials, stickers, "set of the newbie of the company", banners, presentation about the company as an employer, surveys
Video Job search sites	Designing the employer's value proposition in the job description and in the company section

Source: constructed by the authors

The use of different platforms for interacting with the candidate contributes to effective communication and the correct format for broadcasting the employer's value proposition. Modern employer communication in the labor market takes place as much as possible in the digital environment. Formation of video content about the employer with a focus on the interest and partly the requirements of candidates, creating a realistic picture of work in the company. The popularity of social media or YouTube is natural, as the candidate quickly gets to know the company as the employer and, based on the analysis of the visual component and content, decides whether to apply for an internship or a vacancy. A modern employer who does not develop a brand on social media loses a significant portion of candidates and complicates the process of forming new company's positioning or value proposition.

The level of employer attractiveness depends on the set of tools for communication between the candidate and the employer. Several scenarios for using a set of communication tools to develop the employer brand are shown in **Table 2.3**.

If the employer's attractiveness is low, it is necessary to use all the proposed communication tools shown in **Table 2.3**. First, the use of communication tools is aimed at forming the desired image of the employer and associations among the target audience of candidates. Second, positioning the employer brand as a desirable place of work with the necessary value propositions for the candidate. With a low level of

employer brand attractiveness, there is a risk that vacancies will not be filled due to lack of candidates. Therefore, the predictable result after using the communication toolkit is to receive responses from target candidates for vacancies or internships.

Table 2.3 Scenarios for choosing a set of communication tools by the employer

The level of attractiveness of the employer's brand	The recommended tool kit list	The predicted result
Low	Printed materials for interaction on the advertising level or in the company's trade network. Video. Social networks. Offline events (career events at universities or job fairs). Job search sites	1. Increasing the number of supporters of the employer brand. 2. Feedback on internships and vacancies of target candidates. 3. Changing the level of attractiveness of the employer brand to an average level
Average or sufficient	Printed materials for interaction on advertising space or in the company's retail network. Video. Social networks. Job search sites	1. Strengthening the position of the employer's brand in the labor market. 2. Increasing the number of feedback on an internship or vacancy
High	Social networks. Job search sites	1. Strengthening the level of attractiveness for candidates. 2. Reduction of costs for closing vacancies

Source: constructed by the authors

An average or sufficient level of employer attractiveness does not require significant financial resources. The main goal is to keep the attention of target candidates and increase the level of attractiveness. Therefore, the expected result is to strengthen the position of the employer's brand in the labor market and increase the number of responses to internships or vacancies from target candidates.

If the employer's attractiveness is high, its support will strengthen its position in the labor market and reduce the cost of filling vacancies. Inactivity and limited use of communication tools will lead to a loss of employer attractiveness and a transition to a lower level.

The components of communication for forming an attractive employer brand among Generation Z representatives are shown in **Fig. 2.7**.

Key messages (slogans) for students are formed based on their pain points or problems. In general, it is important for young people to communicate career development opportunities and the main advantages of choosing a company as the

employer. For students, this may include rapid career development from an entry-level position to a manager in an accelerated mode during an internship compared to the usual career development of an employee. Also, students may be attracted to working on an international project or the opportunity to work in different departments to choose their future career.

Key messages (slogans)	Components of the value proposition	Communication channels	Additional promo activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls to action about career opportunities • Calls to action about the reasons for choosing the company as an employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive salary • Official employment • Flexible work schedule (remote work format if possible) • Teaching • Additional bonuses (premium programs, provision of high-quality special clothing, insurance) • International experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job search sites • Social networks Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Telegram • The company's career site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social networks about careers in the company Telegram, Instagram, LinkedIn • Employer Brand Ambassador Program • Promotion of activities on university/college resources

Fig. 2.7 Components of employer brand communications among representatives of Generation Z
Source: constructed by the authors

It is recommended to include the following in the employer's value proposition for young people: competitive salary, official employment, flexible working hours (remote work if possible), training, career development, additional bonuses (bonus programs, provision of quality workwear, insurance), and international experience. This list is based on the analysis of the 2021–2022 youth survey, as shown in **Fig. 2.4**.

The main channels of communication with young people are job search sites, social networks Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Telegram, and the company's career website. It is recommended to use Telegram channels for students or recent graduates to disseminate information about career events, internship opportunities, or employer vacancies. Usually, each university has its own Telegram channel moderated by the student council. They inform students about university events and offers from employers. It is also recommended to pay attention to Telegram channels from

the university's career and employment centers. To advertise on Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, you should use video or animation to capture the student's attention from the first seconds. To describe an internship program or a vacancy, it is recommended to describe the company as an employer with the most attractive image for young people, a clear description of the work format, value advantages, and a convenient form of response to the position. The application form should be short and easy to use. The simpler the response format, the greater the number of target candidates for the position. Offline advertising is the least appropriate for advertising among young people, as the generation of buzzers are fans of digital technologies and social networks.

Additional promotional activities to form the employer's brand may include: social networks about careers in the company on Telegram, Instagram, LinkedIn, the employer brand ambassador program, promotional activities on university/college resources. It is recommended that each employer maintain pages about the company's career on Telegram, Instagram, and LinkedIn. In the youth labor market, it is important to identify unique sections about the company as the employer. It is recommended to tell candidates about the employer (interesting and unique facts), the company's team (video interviews with colleagues about work in different departments, interests of employees), value components, work in the company (typical working day, atmosphere in the office/retail network), internship opportunities and vacancies.

The employer brand ambassador program involves students who are supporters of the company as the employer and present the company's opportunities to young people at their respective educational institutions. The goal is to increase the company's recognition as the employer. It is recommended to form a team of student ambassadors who will be responsible for presenting the employer's opportunities during university career events, disseminating them in internal student chats, increasing the number of subscribers in social networks and responses to vacancies. Additional actions to promote the company as the employer on university/college resources are advisable in the period between the seasons of active recruitment for internships or vacancies. This helps to form the company's image as the employer and to be remembered by students who will look for new opportunities in the future. For example, recommendations for successful selection for an internship for subscribing to the company's Instagram page.

It is proposed to divide the employer brand communication plan with Generation Z into several stages: preparatory, testing, implementation, and analysis of the results. It is believed that one project manager – the employer brand development specialist or HR manager – should be responsible for the implementation of the plan.

The preparatory stage is the most costly in terms of human resources and involves the fulfillment of tasks:

- formulating the purpose and goals of the communication plan (first week);
- determination by the team of the key message to be broadcast to the target audience (first week);
- selecting the value propositions that are important to Generation Z and matching them with the employers' capabilities to provide them (second week);
- creating and selecting the most appropriate or all of the channels proposed in **Fig. 2.2** communication channels and the formation of planned efficiency goals for each of them (third week);
- selecting additional promotional activities if it is necessary to increase the level of coverage of the target audience. This depends on the objectives of the communication plan for task 1 (week four);
- formation and approval of the necessary budget for the implementation of the communications plan (fifth week);
- selecting a contractor – an advertising agency (if necessary) (week six);
- creating visuals and text for communication with Generation Z (sixth and seventh weeks).

The next stage of the communication plan is to test the prepared plan among the target audience. It takes at least 4 weeks to implement this stage. The main tasks are:

- finding a focus group with the target audience. These can be newly hired employees or candidates from the talent pool who will be open to sincere feedback and will be able to share advice on which communication channels to choose (week eight);
- organizing a meeting and presenting the visual design of the communication and the components of its implementation plan, collecting feedback from the focus groups (week nine);
- making changes to the communication plan (week ten).

After testing, the communication plan is implemented. Accordingly, the following principles are recommended for this stage:

1. Phasing. That is, access to the selected communication channels occurs at different times.
2. Structured approach. When preparing a communication plan that involves forming the desired image of the employer and recruiting new employees, it is necessary to communicate with the audience in several approaches.
3. Regularity. Communication with the target audience should take place on an ongoing basis using various channels of interaction without long interruptions.

To form the desired image of the employer and achieve the set goals, it is necessary to communicate with the target audience for at least 13 weeks. It is advisable

to plan a periodic analysis of the communication plan regarding the level of achievement of the desired results at least once every 2 weeks.

The final stage of the communication plan among targeted Generation Z candidates is to analyze the results, draw conclusions and recommendations for the future (week twenty-four). It is important to determine which channels and value propositions were most attractive to the candidate during the hiring process. On the other hand, it is advisable to analyze what were the negative results in relation to the goals set and make assumptions about what influenced them.

When updating the employer brand, it is advisable to plan activities for one year that will help to achieve the goals. The goals of the updated brand are determined at the design stage during the employer brand management process.

The goals of forming a positive employer brand of the retail chain for representatives of Generation Z are shown in **Fig. 2.8**.

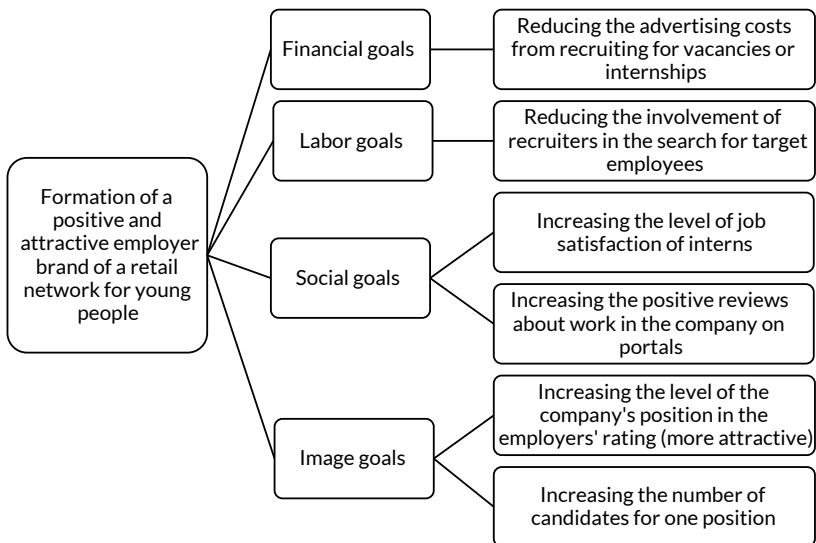


Fig. 2.8 A system of goals for the formation of a positive employer brand of the retail network for representatives of Generation Z

Source: constructed by the authors

To form a positive and attractive employer brand of a retail chain, we propose to set financial, labor, social, and image goals. It is advisable to measure them using the percentage change in the indicator for a certain period: quarter, six months, and a year.

The financial goal is to reduce advertising costs for recruiting for vacancies or internships. The effectiveness of advertising in attracting the attention of target candidates is gradually decreasing. The response rate to internships is increasing due to the desire of students to start working for the company.

If a company is known for its support and recognition of employees, it can have a positive impact on their engagement, reduce recruiting costs, and shorten the time it takes to fill vacancies. The goal of HR staff labor costs is to reduce the involvement of recruiters in finding target employees. That is, the HR team spends less time processing responses to positions that do not meet the requirements and focuses on evaluating targeted student profiles.

Social goals for forming the employer brand among students include: increasing positive feedback about working in the company on portals and increasing the level of job satisfaction of interns. Recommendations of the company as the employer on portals, feedback about working in the company to friends/acquaintances is always one of the ways to disseminate information about the employer's value proposition. Changes in communication approaches, work format and components of the interns' value proposition have a positive impact on the company's image in the labor market. Increasing the level of interns' job satisfaction affects their choice to stay with the company.

Image goals determine the growth of the company's position in the employer rankings and the increase in the number of candidates for one position. Annual ratings by independent agencies or media allow us to analyze changes in the level of attractiveness of the company as the employer in the labor market. The increase in the number of student responses per vacant position is an indicator of the effectiveness of the youth promotion campaign and the ambassadorship program.

The proposed plan for the formation of management actions for the development of the retail chain employer brand to achieve the set goals is shown in **Fig. 2.9**.

The following areas of the employer brand development strategy are highlighted: employee experience, company talent management, and recruitment. For each area, at least two activities are planned to reduce the risk of failure. It is advisable to set key metrics for each of the selected areas to achieve the goals, which, after implementation, will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen strategy and solutions. Also, to achieve each of the goals, it is necessary to plan the necessary resources to achieve them.

Implementation of the updated employer value proposition is planned for at least 1 year. Such plan should be aimed at achieving the main goal of creating a competitive employer brand. It is proposed to allocate at least one evaluation criterion for each planned direction of the employer brand development strategy (recruitment, employee experience, talent management) (**Fig. 2.10**).

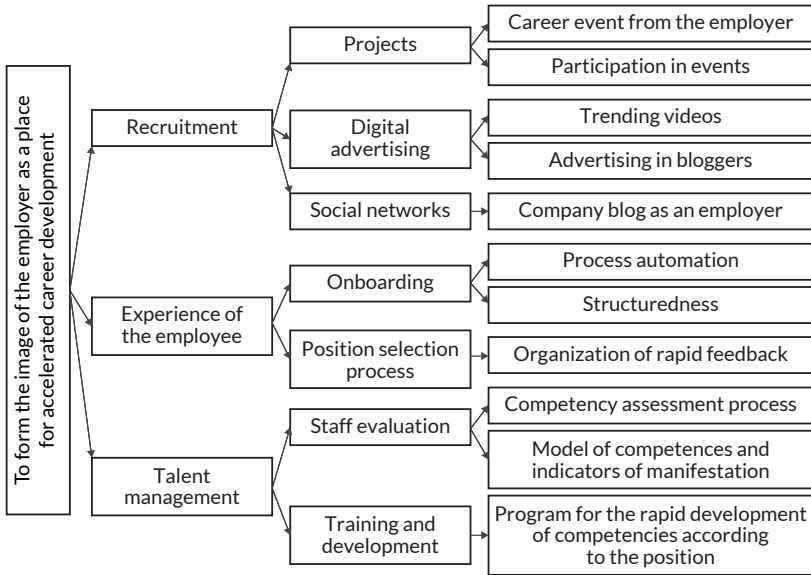


Fig. 2.9 Directions of employer brand development strategy for representatives
 Source: constructed by the authors

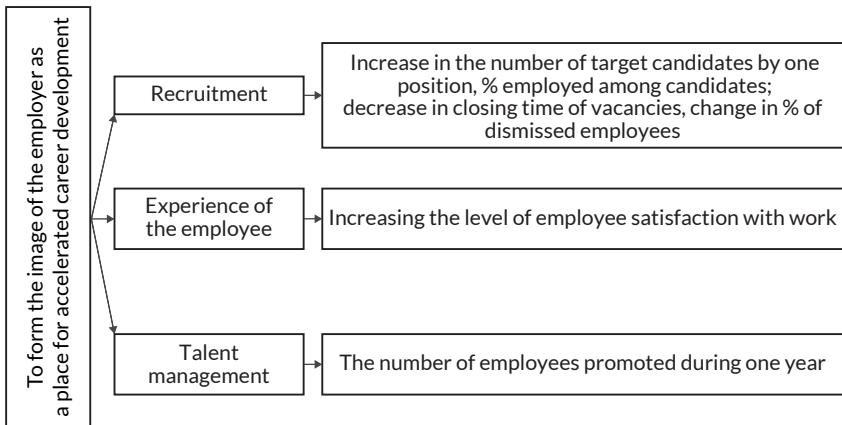


Fig. 2.10 Criteria for evaluating the target indicators of the employer brand development strategy
 Source: constructed by the authors

An increase in the number of target candidates (the number of responses from target candidates to a vacancy) and the percentage of employed candidates among all candidates determines the level of attractiveness of the employer's brand and characterizes the work of the HR team. Reducing the time to close a vacancy is a positive result of employer brand management. A high level of maturity of HR processes helps to reduce the time of recruitment for a vacancy. It means how quickly and efficiently the selection process is carried out for the initial position in the retail chain. The change in the percentage of dismissed employees in the first month and quarter of work in the retail chain characterizes the achievements of the HR team when analyzing the employees attracted to the retail chain.

A competency development plan and training program for retail chain employees is an essential component of achieving the goals of developing the employer's brand. The level of employee satisfaction with work in the company is determined by the employee's experience. This can be measured by the results of a survey as a percentage increase in the level of employee satisfaction with the company in the first year.

An effective talent management process increases the level of job satisfaction in the company. It is proposed to determine the percentage of employees promoted within 1 year as an indicator of talent management assessment. The change in the percentage of employees promoted to a managerial position over a certain period (for example, in the first year) is determined by the work aimed at career development and staff training. The more structured and standardized the process of competence development, the faster employees are promoted and receive the necessary development.

2.7 Conclusions

Forming the employer brand is an important aspect for both companies and job candidates. This process affects the success of the company and the level of satisfaction of its employees. Therefore, the employer brand is seen as the opportunity for companies to attract and retain highly qualified specialists in the team that ensure the vital activity of the business in the context of the global crisis. It includes the reputation of the company as the employer in the labor market, namely, what makes the company stand out from others.

The employer brand for Generation Z is considered taking into account the behavioral, psychological, economic and social views of today's young generation to form positive associations about the company among potential employees. The portrait of Generation Z representatives is based on four indicators: behavioral,

professional, age and global economic trends. The main characteristics of Generation Z representatives are their commitment to digital technologies with several gadgets, a tendency to choose remote or mixed work formats, a preference for startups or small agencies rather than corporations for career development, a preference for online communication over face-to-face communication, and a tendency to choose influencers among publicly known individuals on social media. Employer brand positioning for Generation Z is seen as a strategic process of creating and maintaining a unique image of the company in the eyes of potential and current employees in the labor market, which distinguishes it from other companies and creates certain associations and impressions. The most important characteristics of employer brand management for Generation Z are establishing a connection and long-term communication with the employer's target audience, forming the desired image among the target audience of talents and a unique mission as an employer.

The content and attractiveness of the employer brand for Generation Z is determined by its value proposition. The competitiveness of the employer's value proposition affects the increase in the number of responses from candidates for a vacant position and the willingness to recommend the company as the employer in the labor market. The constituent elements of the employer's value proposition for Generation Z representatives that they use to analyze its attractiveness are those focused on personal development, ensuring the competitiveness of the enterprise, requirements for the company's corporate culture, job and workplace functionality, and material incentives.

Based on the results of the study of Generation Z representatives in 2021–2022, the main components of the employer's brand value proposition were identified and ranked. The TOP 5 most important components of the employer brand value proposition in 2021, in order of importance, were: company training, salary level, official employment, internship schedule, and business rating and reputation. In 2022, due to the war in Ukraine, changes occurred and the top 5 value propositions in order of importance were: salary, internship schedule, company training, the ability to work remotely, and official employment. The most attractive employers in the retail sector are companies with established value propositions aimed at the young audience. The criteria for choosing future employer by young people should be flexible for the changes of generation requirements.

The article proposes the process of forming the employer brand for representatives of Generation Z, which includes the following stages: analysis of the current situation, creation of the image of the desired employer brand, activation of steps to achieve the desired goals and their support. Each stage of the process has developed step-by-step tasks to ensure its continuity, structuredness, and effectiveness.

Analysis of the current state of the employer's brand determines the level of similarity between the requirements of the value proposition from the point of view of Generation Z representatives and the value proposition in terms of their development in the company. The purpose of this analysis is to determine how the assessment of the level of development of the employer brand value proposition meets the expectations of Z Generation representatives. This allows us to substantiate the directions of creating the desired employer brand image. For this purpose, a list of questions for a survey of retail chain employees has been formed, which helps to activate steps to achieve the desired goals and support them, including the employee's attitude to work, assessment of the level of trust in the company as an employer, teamwork and manager, attitude to the company's value proposition, level of affiliation with the company as the employer and interaction within the retail chain. In view of this, the criteria for evaluating the employer brand of competitors include requirements for candidates during employment, selection stages, work schedule and format, salary, non-financial motivation, activities to form the employer brand among young people, internships/leadership programs for young people, and social media about careers, which, according to the analysis of the survey of Generation Z representatives, are of the highest importance when choosing the future job.

It is proposed to develop the employer brand development strategy based on the following components: updating the brand book, communication strategy, and the action plan for forming the desired employer image among talents. The employer's brand book defines the visual design of advertising among the target audience on various media platforms, design features and color scheme that form associations with the employer, and key messages (slogans) of the employer. The components of the communication plan include key messages (slogans), components of the value proposition, communication sources and additional promotional activities. The developed tools for communication between Generation Z candidate and a retail employer help to attract attention and convey the employer's value proposition in a way that is relevant and relevant to the target audience. It is advisable to use the following communication channels for Generation Z: job search sites, social networks Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Telegram, and the company's career website. We also suggest the following additional promotional activities to form the employer's brand: social networks about careers in the company Telegram, Instagram, LinkedIn, the employer brand ambassador program, promotional activities on university/college resources. The employer brand communication plan with Generation Z is considered by stages with the definition of tasks and the time period for their implementation. To create an attractive employer brand of a retail chain for Generation Z, it is proposed to define four types of goals: financial, labor, social and image. The target

indicators for these goals are as follows: reducing advertising costs for recruiting for vacancies or internships (financial); reducing the involvement of recruiters in the search for target employees (labor); increasing positive feedback about the company's work on portals and increasing the level of satisfaction with the work of interns (social); increasing the level of the company's position in the employer rating (more attractive) and increasing the number of candidates for one position (image).

The analysis of the components of the employer brand development strategy forms the management action plan to achieve the goals of the employer brand development among young people in three areas: recruitment, employee experience and talent management. The following criteria are proposed to be used as criteria for successful implementation of the employer brand development strategy: increase in the number of candidates for one position, % of candidates employed, reduction in the time to close a vacancy, reduction in the % of dismissed employees, increase in the level of job satisfaction in the company and increase in the number of promoted employees in the first year. The employer brand development strategy strengthens the positive feedback on the work of the company's employees.

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