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EMPLOYER BRANDING IN THE AGE OF FLEXIBILITY: ALIGNING WORK MODELS WITH WORKFORCE EXPECTATIONS

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Abstract: This paper examines the growing importance of flexibility in shaping employer branding strategies. Employer branding refers to the image and reputation an organization builds to attract and retain talent. Traditionally, employer brand was shaped by internal messaging and workplace culture, but in today's digital age external perceptions, especially through platforms like Glassdoor or social media, play a significant role. Flexibility, once seen as a benefit, has become a strategic necessity, particularly following the global shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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The study highlights how flexible work arrangements enhance employee satisfaction, wellbeing, and retention. Remote work enables access to a global talent pool, supports inclusivity, and aligns with the expectations of younger generations who prioritize work-life balance and autonomy. Surveys show that companies offering flexibility attract more applicants and experience lower turnover rates.

Despite some resistance from traditional employers, flexibility is now a key factor in employer attractiveness. Organizations that fail to adapt risk losing top talent. Hence, flexibility is not just a trend but a core element of modern employer branding. To remain competitive, companies must integrate flexible work into their talent strategies and align their brand messaging with evolving workforce expectations.

Key words: *employer branding, hiring, flexibility, remote work, retention*

Introduction

In today's competitive job market, organizations must do more than just offering good salaries to attract and keep talented employees. One of the most important tools for this is employer branding, the way a company presents itself as a great place to work. A strong employer brand helps people understand what it's like to work at a company and why they should choose it over others. It includes the company's values, culture, and the overall experience it offers to candidates and employees (Anderson, 2024).

At the same time, the way people work is changing. Traditional office-based jobs are no longer the only option. Many employees now expect flexibility, such as remote work, flexible hours or both. This shift became especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many companies had to quickly adapt to remote work. As a result, flexibility has become a key part of what makes a company attractive to job seekers (Novak Leadership Institute, 2025).

This paper explores how flexibility influences employer branding. It looks at why flexibility matters to today's workforce and how companies can use it to build a stronger, more appealing brand. By understanding this connection,

organizations can improve their hiring strategies and better meet the needs of modern employees.

Understanding Employer Branding

The employer brand can be understood as a promise made by an organization to its current and potential employees. For instance, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK defines the employer brand as a collection of attributes and qualities - often intangible - that make an organization unique. The employer brand communicates a specific type of experience at work and is designed to attract individuals who are most likely to succeed and thrive within the organization's culture (Walker & Platt-Higgins, 2009).

The employer brand can also be defined in terms of the image and reputation an organization aims to project. For example, Brett Minchington, an author known for his work on employer branding, describes it as the perception of the organization as a great place to work. This definition emphasizes how the employer brand reflects the organization's desired identity in the eyes of current employees, job seekers, and the wider public (Minchington, 2006). Just as companies promote their products to attract customers, they also promote their workplace culture, values, and benefits to attract and retain talented employees.

On the other hand, defining the employer brand through the perceptions and associations people have with the organization is often more practical and insightful. This approach offers a more accurate understanding of brand's actual status and value. It emphasizes that an employer brand is shaped not only by the messages a company communicates, but also by how people experience the organization and what they hear from others. In this way, it encourages a more honest and reflective view of how the brand is truly perceived in the market (Mosley, 2014).

In general terms - the most valuable element of (any) brand today is what the customers say about that brand to their contacts. In employer branding it's the same, what the employees and candidates say about the brand matters. In today's digital age, information spreads globally and instantly through platforms

such as Glassdoor and various social media channels. This is especially relevant for Generation Y (*Millennials*) and Generation Z (*Zoomers*), who rely heavily on digital tools and online reviews to make decisions about where to bank, eat, socialize, exercise, or work. This trend is unlikely to change (Everett, 2016).

Researchers have consistently emphasized that a strong and well-developed employer brand plays a key role in attracting and retaining talent, especially in competitive labor markets, or in the ‘war for talent’, as we tend to say (Cascio, Collings, & Mellahi, 2017). For organizations that take their brand seriously, it is essential to invest in aligning employee behavior with brand messaging. Without this alignment, there is a risk that the brand’s public image will be shaped more by external perceptions than by intentional communication.

In summary, employer brand refers to the combination of practical, financial, and emotional benefits that employees receive from working at a company. These benefits are closely associated with the company’s identity as an employer (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). The primary purpose of the employer brand is to offer a clear and consistent framework that helps management set priorities, enhance productivity, and strengthen efforts in attracting, retaining, and engaging employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

Measuring Employer Brand

To build a strong employer brand, companies often use tools such as employee testimonials, social media, career websites, and employer review platforms. They may also participate in rankings or awards that recognize great workplaces, like Universum, Glassdoor, and Great Place to Work. Successful employer branding often depends on close collaboration between marketing and human resources. In every successful employer branding strategy, this partnership plays a key role. The marketing team contributes with an external viewpoint and specialized communication skills, or “outside-in” perspective. Meanwhile, the HR team provides deep understanding of employee motivations, which helps shape the strategy, and ensure its implementation throughout the employee experience. Together, marketing and HR form a mutually beneficial

relationship, combining distinct but complementary strengths to achieve shared goals (Chatterjee, Bongarzone, & Schanne, 2022).

The starting point for employer branding can vary greatly between organizations. Companies that operate in the business-to-consumer (B2C) sector often have an advantage compared to those in business-to-business (B2B) markets, startups, or newer companies that are not yet well known in the market. In general, the stronger a company's overall brand, the stronger its position as an employer brand. Additionally, companies with a larger customer base or broader public recognition tend to have a more favorable position in terms of employer branding.

For example, young professionals with engineering academic qualifications tend to prefer employers from the German automotive industry. According to Universum 'World's Most Attractive Employers 2024', three German automotive companies rank among the top 10 most attractive employers for engineering students: Mercedes-Benz holds 3rd place, BMW is ranked 5th, and Volkswagen comes in at 8th (Universum, World's Most Attractive Employers 2024, 2024). Among newcomers to the job market, BMW, Porsche, and Audi were ranked as the top three preferred employers, though for different reasons. BMW is associated with engaging and meaningful work, while Audi and Porsche are recognized for their strong focus on innovation. These companies have built a strong employer brand through both the quality of their products and their reputation as workplaces. It is also understandable that companies such as Bosch, Deutsche Bahn, and Amazon are included among the ten most popular employers, given their strong market presence and brand recognition (Hermann, 2023).

Company Culture and Employer Branding

Company Culture significantly shapes the employer brand. The concept of 'company culture', represents the values, behaviors, and practices that define how people work together in the organization. A positive and inclusive culture can make employees feel valued and motivated (Lawrence, 2025). Employee Experience, or how employees perceive their journey within the company, counts every moment within the organization, from recruitment and onboarding to

daily work and career development, all the way to the process of leaving the organization. A good experience leads to higher satisfaction, loyalty and stronger employer brand (Sibisi & Kappers, 2022).

Employer branding is important because it influences how people feel about working for a company. A strong employer brand can help a company attract top talent, reduce hiring costs, and improve employee engagement and retention. On the other hand, a weak or negative employer brand can make it difficult to hire skilled workers and may lead to high turnover rates. From a talent management perspective, skills shortages and high turnover require organizations to invest more in human resource planning and succession strategies. This often leads to larger budgets for employer branding and increased focus on a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving employee retention (Taylor, 2021).

In summary, Employer branding plays a vital role in attracting talent and it is a key reason why individuals choose to work for a particular organization. The employer brand reflects the company's culture and its employee value proposition (EVP), *i.e.* what it offers to employees in return for their skills and engagement.

Leadership and Employer Branding

Transparent and trustworthy leadership plays a major role in building a strong employer brand. Employees are more likely to stay with a company when they feel heard and respected by their leaders. While individuals may be initially attracted to an organization because of its brand reputation, their decision to leave is frequently influenced by their direct relationship with immediate supervisors or managers. How a company is viewed by the public, including its commitment to sustainability, environmental protection, diversity, and ethical practices, also affects its employer brand. Many job seekers today prefer to work for companies that have a positive impact on society (Zheng, Kim, Kark, & Masco, 2023).

However, Employer branding is not only about attracting new talent but also about keeping current employees engaged. When employees feel proud of where they work, they are more likely to recommend the company to others and

contribute to its success. In summary, Employer branding is the most visible part of managing an employer brand. It involves using consistent visual elements, such as logos and design - to help identify and distinguish the organization. Still, this is only one part of a larger process. More important is the systematic management of all the factors that influence how people experience and perceive the brand (Mosley, 2014).

In other words, while employer branding refers to specific activities, employer brand management is a broader, more strategic approach. It involves aligning various human resource practices such as recruitment, onboarding, talent development, performance management, and leadership training, to create a consistent and positive brand experience.

A brand that is strong, clear, and transparent helps organizations attract the right candidates and reduces some of the common challenges in recruitment. In contrast, a weak or misleading employer brand can discourage potential applicants or create false expectations. This may result in higher turnover among new hires and lower performance once they join the organization (Grossman & Schoolderman, 2022).

In today's competitive job market, employer branding has become a strategic priority. Organizations that invest in their employer brand are better positioned to compete for talent, especially among younger generations who value purpose, flexibility, and work-life balance.

In addition to visible leadership and communication practices, several research-backed psychological and organizational factors strongly influence how flexible work arrangements affect employer branding. One critical element is the concept of "psychosocial safety climate", which represents the shared perceptions among employees on how their psychological health is protected and valued at work. This climate has been linked to higher levels of employee engagement and reduced stress, particularly in flexible or hybrid work environments (Dollard & Bakker, 2010).

Closely related to this is the concept of psychological safety, which allows employees to express ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety promotes a culture of openness and innovation, essential for attracting and retaining modern talent (Edmondson,

1999). A broader review confirms its role in enhancing collaboration and performance, especially when work arrangements are decentralized (Newman, Donohue, & Eva, 2017).

Organizational justice is also a principal factor: employees are more likely to embrace flexible work models when they perceive fair treatment in how such models are being offered and managed. Perceptions of fairness regarding workload distribution, access to remote work, and responsiveness to personal needs contribute significantly to employer brand equity (Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006).

In practical terms, job resources like autonomy, flexibility, and work-life balance have a measurable impact on engagement, especially under demanding conditions. Meta-analyses in organizational psychology consistently demonstrate that job resources buffer stress and promote positive outcomes when flexibility is well-implemented (Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011). Emerging research further confirms that flexibility strengthens the link between employer branding and employee well-being. Work-life balance, when supported through consistent employer messaging and structure, enhances job satisfaction and even performance (MedinaGarrido, BiedmaFerrer, & RamosRodríguez, 2023).

Finally, among younger generations, particularly Generation Z, employer branding acts as a moderator between flexible policies and employee retention. A strong employer brand reinforces the perceived value of flexibility and reduces emotional exhaustion, especially in early-career professionals (Hendriana, Christopher, & Zain, 2022).

These findings suggest that flexibility becomes a strategic advantage only when embedded in an ecosystem of psychological safety, perceived fairness, and clear employer value communication. Without these elements, flexible work arrangements may lose their appeal or even backfire in competitive talent markets.

Flexibility and remote work

Since the Industrial Revolution, the way people work has remained mostly the same. Many employees still travel to a workplace, working from 09 to 17 h, Monday to Friday, and then return home. This model was once necessary because people had to be physically present to do their jobs or communicate with others.

However, in today's world, many jobs involve thinking and using information, not physical labor. These are called "knowledge jobs," and they can often be done from anywhere with a laptop and internet connection (Dale, 2021).

Before 2019, hiring people to work remotely was mostly reserved for companies with deep enough pockets, big teams, and enough infrastructure globally. However, the pandemic completely rewrote the rules of the game. Suddenly, almost everyone was working from home and companies realized something incredible – they could hire anyone, and anywhere so that even the smaller startups are building global teams. They're using Teams, Zoom, Slack and other communication tools that really make distance irrelevant. Moreover, these tools have become cheap and accessible, so that any company can become 'global'. Today, each and every company is competing in a global marketplace, whether they plan it or not. The customers, the competitors, the opportunities, they are all global by default. So, the talent strategy has to be, as well.

Flexibility as competitive advantage

All organizations have to embrace flexibility if they want to stay competitive in attracting and, specifically, retaining talent. Flexible work is no longer envisaged as benefit. It is a core part of a successful talent strategy in today's market, in a turbulent job landscape, having direct or indirect competition, everywhere. According to the 2024 Global Workforce Report, a staggering 98.2% of employers agree that flexible work options are a key factor for candidates when evaluating job offers. This insight is drawn from a comprehensive survey of 4,126 business and HR leaders at the director level and above, spanning diverse regions including the UK, US, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Australia, Sweden, South Korea, and Japan.

The findings reveal a clear trend: companies that offer remote and flexible work arrangements are not only retaining their talent – they are attracting top candidates from around the world. This global competition means that even organizations hiring locally are now contending with international employers for the same talent pool (Remote, 2024).

Another research, which surveyed over 9,000 employees across 23 countries, indicates a growing demand for workplace flexibility. Employees ranked work-life balance benefits, such as job sharing and designated technology-free hours, as the third most valued benefit, following competitive rewards and a strong organizational culture. Moreover, among Generation Z respondents, work-life balance programs were identified as the second most important benefit, surpassed only by medical coverage. These programs were rated higher than other traditional benefits, including paid time off, career development opportunities, and retirement savings (AON, 2025).

In addition, the 2023 workforce survey by The Conference Board, which included over 1,500 U.S. employees (mostly office workers), also highlights the growing importance of workplace flexibility as a key component of employee satisfaction and retention. 65% of workers ranked workplace flexibility, such as control over work location and hours, as one of the most important non-salary benefits. This was rated higher than bonuses, paid time off, retirement plans, and healthcare. These results are consistent with the 2022 survey (The Conference Board, Survey: US Employees Prioritize Workplace Flexibility, 2023), where 71% of respondents also prioritized flexibility, second only to retirement plans.

Women are more likely than men to value flexibility (72% vs. 57%), as well as generous paid time off. Men tend to prioritize financial incentives like bonuses and stock options more than women. 67% of fully remote workers and 68% of hybrid workers prioritize flexibility, compared to only 49% of fully in-person workers. This suggests that employees who have experienced flexible arrangements are less likely to accept roles without them (The Conference Board, Survey: US Employees Prioritize Workplace Flexibility as a Key Component of Compensation, 2023).

Perhaps most striking is the impact of inflexibility: over 73% of companies reported losing employees in the past six months to competitors who offered more adaptable work environments (Remote, 2024). The message is clear – to remain competitive, companies must rethink their hiring strategies and embrace flexibility as a core component of their employer brand.

Flexibility as global hiring enabler

Expanding access to a global talent pool is not only about increasing the number of potential candidates - it is also about making more strategic and effective hiring decisions that can enhance productivity and drive business growth.

Flexibility in the workplace is essential, but the fact it enables global hiring - takes this concept further, by allowing access to top talent worldwide. This approach is not only about expanding the talent pool, it is about making more strategic hiring decisions that enhance productivity and drive business growth.

Hiring internationally allows companies to widen their employer brand visibility and reach highly skilled professionals regardless of their location. In a recent remote workforce survey, over 26% of hiring managers reported an increase in both the number and quality of applicants after opening roles to global candidates (Remote, 2024). This model removes geographical limitations, allowing organizations to connect with individuals who may not be willing or able to relocate. A broader reach naturally leads to a larger pool of qualified candidates, especially for specialized or hard-to-fill roles.

Global and remote hiring also supports more inclusive employment practices. Many individuals with disabilities or caregiving responsibilities actively seek remote opportunities due to the flexibility and accessibility they offer. Additionally, some professionals prefer to remain in their local communities for personal or family reasons. Remote work enables them to contribute meaningfully to their organizations without needing to relocate, strengthening the positive image of the organization, at the same time (Arnold, 2025).

Still, attracting talent is only part of the equation - retaining it is equally important. According to 2024 Global Workforce Report, employee satisfaction increases significantly - by over 40% - when companies offer flexible remote work options. This satisfaction translates into higher retention rates. Nearly 25% of companies observed improved employee engagement scores as a direct result of flexibility initiatives. These scores are strong indicators of employee loyalty and long-term commitment. In fact, remote work has been shown to reduce employee turnover by more than 26%, resulting in greater organizational stability and cost savings (Remote, 2024).

In the post-pandemic era when remote work has become a current reality, new approaches to collaboration between in-office and remote workers are necessary. The importance of developing strong interpersonal skills, such as collaboration skills, active listening, curiosity or demonstrating empathy are in strong demand (Marr, 2022).

Flexibility impacts employer brand more than ever

Recent research by Universum highlights that flexible working arrangements are increasingly important to university students. Among business students, flexibility ranks as the 9th most important career preference, while IT and technology students place it even higher, at 6th place. Traditionally, engineering students have shown less interest in flexibility compared to their peers in other fields. However, in 2024, flexibility rose to the 10th most important preference among engineering students, a significant increase of five positions from the previous year (Universum, 2024 World's Most Attractive Employer Ranking, 2024).

A separate 2024 study conducted by the Engineering Management Institute in collaboration with ActionsProve found that engineers now prioritize a higher quality of life over other factors, such as competitive salaries and career progression when evaluating potential employers. This shift is understandable given that 63% of engineers report that work-related stress negatively affects their physical or mental health, while 46% of them would consider leaving their current job if remote work options were removed (ActionsProve & Engineering Management Institute, 2024).

Flexibility is quickly becoming a top priority. There is no going back to life before the pandemic because, nowadays, employees expect flexibility as a standard, not just a nice bonus.

However, despite the growing demand for flexible work, some major companies, including JPMorgan Chase, and BlackRock, have begun requiring employees to return to the office (or to client's place), at least part-time. Amazon and Goldman Sachs have eliminated remote working, while Disney and Starbucks are restricting the number of days spent out of the office (Universum, Talent Outlook 2025 [eBook], 2025). Moreover, many organizations never changed their approach, and they still follow old ways of working. People continue to commute during rush hour, which causes stress, wastes time, and harms the environment. Much of the work done in offices could easily be done from home or other locations. Still, those who try to work differently often face negative judgments or fewer career opportunities. If we rethink how we work, thanks to advancements of technology and job roles, we could create more flexible, efficient, and healthier ways of working for many people (Dale, 2021).

Still, full-time in-office work is unlikely to become the work standard again. A global research shows that 80% of Generation Z office workers consider flexible work either as “high value” or “essential” (Ivanti, 2024). Universum's findings further support this trend, showing that one in three young professionals would be less interested - or not interested at all - in working for an employer that does not offer remote work options (Universum, Talent Outlook 2025 [eBook], 2025).

In addition, flexibility is seen as a cost-effective benefit that can help companies attract and retain talent without increasing salary expenses. Leaders are encouraged to maintain and expand flexible work policies to stay competitive in a tight labor market (The Conference Board, Survey: US Employees Prioritize Workplace Flexibility as a Key Component of Compensation, 2023).

Misconceptions about remote work

A common misconception about remote work is that it reduces productivity. However, the data shows the opposite: over 45% of employers who adopted

international remote work models reported increased productivity (Alexander, De Smet, & Mysore, 2020). This improvement is not due to the absence of an office, but rather the presence of a supportive infrastructure and a results-oriented culture. When employees are empowered to manage their time, avoid long commutes, and work in environments that suit them, they tend to be more focused, efficient, and motivated (Day, 2025).

Although flexible work options may (negatively) affect career advancement in practice, today's employees still see them as highly valuable and make them a top priority. A Deloitte survey of 1,000 U.S. professionals examined how much people value workplace flexibility and offered guidance for leaders to better align with employee expectations. The results show that 90% of participants value flexibility, 94% of participants believe flexible work would benefit them, especially by reducing stress, improving mental health, and helping them better balance work and personal life. When flexible work options are available, professionals tend to use them. Among those whose employers offer such options, 82% report taking advantage of them. The most valued choices are flexible working hours and remote work, including working from home. A compressed workweek is less commonly preferred (Deloitte, Workplace flexibility survey, 2025).

The Role of Flexibility in Employer Branding and Recruitment Strategies

The 2024 Universum report highlights a growing emphasis on flexible work arrangements as a key factor influencing employer attractiveness among university students globally. As the workforce continues to evolve, flexibility has emerged as a central element in shaping employer branding, particularly for Generation Z. Flexible working conditions are now considered essential by young talent across all major fields of study, such as business, engineering, and IT. While business and IT students have consistently valued flexibility, the 2024 data reveals a notable shift among engineering students. This shift suggests that even students entering traditionally rigid industries are increasingly unwilling to compromise on work-life balance (Universum, World's Most Attractive Employers 2024, 2024).

Lack of flexibility is a potential deal-breaker. One in three students stated they would be less interested, or not interested at all, in working for an employer that does not offer remote work options. This finding underscores the strategic importance of flexibility in employer branding. Companies that fail to offer flexible arrangements risk alienating a significant portion of the emerging talent pool (Universum, Talent Outlook 2025 [eBook], 2025).

The demand for flexibility reflects broader cultural changes in the workplace. Generation Z workers prioritize quality of life and autonomy over traditional markers of success such as high pay or leadership roles. This generation's expectations are reshaping how employers must present themselves to remain competitive (Draper & Forbes Expert Panel, 2025).

Flexible work arrangements can support better mental health. 43% of professionals identify reduced stress and improved mental well-being as the main benefit, followed by better balance between work and personal life. Additionally, one in three professionals believe flexibility would boost their job satisfaction and morale, while nearly 30% say it would enhance their productivity and efficiency. Employees also expect leadership to promote a culture of flexibility. Over half (52%) of professionals believe that CEOs and senior management play the most important role in advancing flexible work practices within their organizations (Fisher, Jen., 2020).

Flexibility as attraction driver across generations

Flexibility continues to be an important factor in attracting people to a workplace. In 2023, McCrindle conducted a study involving 2,003 Australians aged between 18 and 77. The findings show that Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, ranked flexible working hours as the fifth most important reason for choosing a workplace, with 54 percent of them identifying it as a key factor. Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, placed flexibility slightly higher, in fourth place, with 63 percent mentioning it. Generation Y and born between 1981 and 1996, considered flexible working hours the most important factor, with 73 percent of respondents selecting it. Generation Z (born between 1997 and

2012), the youngest group in the study, also ranked flexibility in fourth place, with 65 percent of participants highlighting it as important (McCrindle, 2023). These results suggest that while flexibility is valued across all age groups. Generation Y is leading in this trend, which is understandable given that many individuals in this group are either already raising young children or are planning to start a family soon.

To avoid falling behind, businesses really do need to consider how remote and flexible options can future proof their workforce and retain their top performers across different generations.

Recent Narrative Change

While remote work has brought undeniable benefits, it also presents several challenges that organizations must address. According to Harvard Business Review (2025), remote and hybrid work arrangements can lead to reduced collaboration, lower overall performance, and a gradual erosion of company culture. These effects are particularly concerning in roles that rely heavily on teamwork and spontaneous communication (Cappelli & Nehmeh, 2025). Similarly, research from the Society for Human Resource Management - SHRM highlights that 62% of managers believe remote work negatively impacts career advancement, while 59% of employees report fewer networking opportunities. Additionally, 54% of workers say remote work leads to longer hours, contributing to burnout and work-life imbalance (SHRM, 2021). Another HBR study, done back in 2017, found that remote employees often feel excluded from team dynamics, suspecting that colleagues talk behind their backs or make decisions without their input. This sense of isolation can undermine trust and engagement, especially in decentralized teams. These findings suggest that while flexibility is a powerful tool for attracting and retaining talent, it must be implemented thoughtfully. Organizations should invest in inclusive communication practices, leadership training, and digital collaboration tools to mitigate the downsides of remote work. Balancing autonomy with connection is essential to ensure that remote work enhances - not hinders - employee experience and employer brand (Grenny & Maxfield, 2017).

Conclusion

Employer branding has emerged as a strategic imperative in today's evolving workplace. It enables organizations to communicate their unique value proposition and attract talent that aligns with their culture and goals. A strong employer brand not only supports recruitment and retention but also enhances overall business performance.

Flexibility has become a cornerstone of employer branding, particularly as younger generations prioritize work-life balance, mental health, and autonomy. Offering flexible work arrangements is no longer a perk - it is a strategic necessity. It allows companies to access global talent, support inclusion, and improve employee satisfaction and engagement.

Global hiring and remote work are not about lowering standards - they are about raising them by accessing talent that was previously out of reach. Flexibility is no longer a luxury; it is a strategic advantage that enhances recruitment, inclusion, retention, and productivity.

However, while the benefits of remote and flexible work are well-documented, recent research highlights important challenges. According to Harvard Business Review, remote work can weaken collaboration, reduce performance, and erode company culture (Cappelli & Nehmeh, 2025). SHRM reports that 62% of managers believe remote work harms career advancement, and 59% of employees feel it limits networking opportunities (SHRM, 2021). Another HBR study found that remote workers often feel excluded from team dynamics and decision-making processes. These findings underscore the need for organizations to implement flexibility thoughtfully, with attention to communication, inclusion, and leadership practices (Grenny & Maxfield, 2017).

Insights from an international company further illustrate this complexity. While remote workers initially reported higher well-being and engagement, the gap between remote and office-based employees narrowed over time. Office workers eventually outperformed remote peers in areas such as career development and internal mobility. This suggests that while flexibility enhances well-being, in-person interactions may still play a critical role in professional growth.

In conclusion, flexibility remains a powerful driver of employer branding, but it must be embedded within a broader strategy that fosters connection, fairness, and psychological safety. Organizations that strike this balance will be best positioned to attract, engage, and retain top talent in a competitive global market.

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BRENDIRANJE POSLODAVCA U ERI FLEKSIBILNOSTI: USKLAĐIVANJE MODELA RADA SA OČEKIVANJIMA ZAPOSLENIH

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Apstrakt: Ovaj rad ispituje sve veći značaj fleksibilnosti u oblikovanju strategija brendiranja poslodavca. Brendiranje poslodavca odnosi se na imidž i reputaciju koje organizacija gradi kako bi privukla i zadržala talente. Tradicionalno, brend poslodavca formiran je internim porukama i organizacionom kulturom, ali u današnjoj digitalnoj eri, spoljna percepcija – posebno putem platformi kao što su Glassdoor ili društvene mreže – ima značajnu ulogu. Fleksibilnost, koja je nekada bila posmatrana kao pogodnost, danas je postala strateška nužnost, naročito nakon globalnog prelaska na rad na daljinu tokom pandemije COVID-19.

Studija ističe kako fleksibilni oblici rada doprinose većem zadovoljstvu zaposlenih, njihovom blagostanju i zadržavanju u kompaniji. Rad na daljinu omogućava pristup globalnom bazenu talenata, podstiče inkluzivnost i usklađen je sa očekivanjima mlađih generacija koje vrednuju ravnotežu između poslovnog i privatnog života, kao i autonomiju. Istraživanja pokazuju da kompanije koje nude fleksibilnost privlače veći broj kandidata i imaju nižu stopu odliva zaposlenih.

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Uprkos određenom otporu tradicionalnih poslodavaca, fleksibilnost je danas ključni faktor atraktivnosti poslodavca. Organizacije koje se ne prilagode rizikuju gubitak vrhunskih kadrova. Zbog toga fleksibilnost nije samo prolazni trend, već suštinski element savremenog brendiranja poslodavaca. Kako bi ostale konkurentne, kompanije moraju integrisati fleksibilni rad u svoje strategije za upravljanje talentima i uskladiti komunikaciju brenda sa promenljivim očekivanjima radne snage.

Ključne reči: *brendiranje poslodavca, zapošljavanje, fleksibilnost, rad na daljinu, zadržavanje zaposlenih*