REBRANDING EMPLOYMENT BRAND: ESTABLISHING A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA TO EXPLORE THE ATTRIBUTES, ANTECEDENTS, AND CONSEQUENCES OF WORKERS' EMPLOYMENT BRAND KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

Two primary approaches have been used to study employment brands and branding. First, there is a long history of the study of organizational attraction. Second, in the past 10–15 years, there has been growth in a hybrid stream of research combining branding concepts from the consumer psychology literature with I/O psychology frameworks of organizational attraction and applicant job search behavior. In this chapter, we take an entirely different approach and suggest that the theoretical models built around product/service brand knowledge can readily accommodate employment brands and branding without
hybridizing the framework with I/O psychology. This merging of employment brand with product and service brands is accomplished simply by recognizing employment as an economic exchange between workers and employers and recognizing workers as cognitive and emotional beings that vary in their talents and have their own vectors of preferences for the employment offering. After developing a testable model of the components, antecedents, and consequences of employment brand knowledge, we review the existing employment brand and organizational attraction literature and identify multiple opportunities for additional research.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have traditionally outlined a series of stages by which organizations hire new employees including: determining job vacancies, advertising open positions, applicants evaluating and responding to vacancy announcements, screening of applicants, extending job offers, and accepting or declining the job offers (Phillips & Gully, 2009). There are several other, common paths by which organizations match talent to job opportunities. First, two very different streams of research suggest that anywhere from 20% to 80% of all people that move from one job to another with no intervening spell of unemployment do so after receiving an unsolicited offer to interview (Fallick & Fleischman, 2001; Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008). In other words, organizations frequently reach through the bureaucracy to make unsolicited offers to currently employed individuals not seeking employment. Second, workers apply for employment independent of advertised vacancies. Modern estimates are difficult to come by but data collected from a large bank showed that 19% of the employees hired from 1961 to 1964 were “walk in” and applied without having been encouraged to do so by “help wanted” advertising (Gannon, 1971). With nearly all mid- to large-sized firms in the United States having on-line application capabilities, there is no reason to think this rate is lower today. Finally, data from the National Organizations Study shows that 37% of employers frequently bypass the five stage process described earlier and recruit active and passive job seekers via employee referrals (Kalleberg, Knoke, Marsden, & Spaeth, 1996, p. 138).

Although the traditional I/O psychology lens offers important insights as to how individuals seek employment and respond to recruiting efforts, the earlier trends suggest there are alternative ways individuals make decisions about where to apply that are not captured by this framework. The purpose of this chapter is to offer an alternative view to the traditional job search and choice literature grounded in consumer psychology. Specifically we will be reviewing the employment brand literature that has emerged over the past 15–20 years (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). There are a number of stellar reviews of the pure I/O psychology and hybrid I/O psychology-consumer psychology based recruiting and job choice literature (see Barber, 1998; Cable & Turban, 2001; Schwab, Rynes & Aldag, 1987, respectively). Although we acknowledge and occasionally draw upon this previous work, we ground our review in the frameworks of consumer psychology, specifically employment branding. As Cable and Turban’s (2001) review covered the literature published before 2001, our review generally covers the literature published from 2001 to the present.

This chapter is organized into five sections. In the section on product brands, we introduce the concept of brands from the consumer psychology literature. In the section on worker-based employment brand equity, we translate brands from the perspective of the consumer to the worker actively or passively considering employment options. Next, we review the attributes of the employment offering; again translating the consumer psychology conception of product and service attributes to the employment context. In the section on activities used to develop workers’ employment brand knowledge, we examine how employers seek to create employment brand knowledge in the minds of prospective workers. Finally, we conclude the chapter with a review of organizational attraction. Although this is a construct developed and frequently used by I/O psychologists, we felt it too important not to mention in a review of the employment brand literature.

Throughout this chapter, we use the term “worker” as an all-encompassing term to denote individuals who currently sell or may sell their labor to an individual or organization for economic reward (Kelloway, Gallagher, & Barling, 2004, p. 110). Labor is broadly defined to include physical, emotional, and mental energies (Kaufman, 2004). Thus worker encompasses blue and white collar workers, professional and technical workers, knowledge workers, supervisors, middle managers, and nonowner executives. The term excludes individuals who are employers, what the Marxist might call capitalists: someone who owns the means of production, purchases the labor powers of others, and does not sell their own labor power (Wright & Perrone, 1977).

We considered using the word “employee” instead of worker but this implies individuals who are currently employed. When we discuss the
employment brand we may be referring to the employment knowledge structures of the current employees of a focal firm and/or individuals not affiliated with the focal firm. These outside individuals might include those employed but actively seeking alternative employment or fully engaged workers that might be potential lateral hiring targets (Gardner, Stansbury, & Hart, 2010). Others with employment brand knowledge include the unemployed, including both those looking for work and those fully engaged in nonwork endeavors. Outside individuals might also include future workers. For instance, large employers such as Texas Instruments, IBM, Boeing, and others sponsor science career themed summer camps for middle and high school students both to increase the number of students who pursue science as a career but also as a way to create employment brand knowledge in future workers (Shellenbarger, 2006).

**PRODUCT BRANDS**

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Keller, 1993, p. 2). Although the concept has an interesting modern history (Blackett, 2009), brands have very ancient roots. Archeologists have discovered in the remains of the Indus Valley civilization (~2600 BC), what is today India, small square seals that were sold to manufacturers and merchants to mark, distinguish, and transmit information about the quality of goods sold (Moore & Reid, 2008).

"Brands," of course, are components of but distinct from the goods or services they represent. A product is anything that is offered on the market for consumption, attention, acquisition, or use that may satisfy consumer needs or wants. Numerous generic products might satisfy specific consumer wants and needs. Some products and services have attributes and benefits that make them different and sometimes better than competitors' offerings including packaging, delivery, financing, product design, or features. Brands transmit to consumers both generic and distinguishing product utility but also unrealized and unarticulated intangible benefits of ownership and consumption such as heritage, symbolic and emotional meaning, status, and prestige (Berthon, Hulteb, & Pitt, 1999; Keller, 2008). For example, even though they satisfy very similar wants and have similar features, the Apple Inc. branded portable media player iPod is positively distinguished in nearly all consumers' minds from the Sansa View produced by SanDisk on multiple tangible and intangible dimensions.

Brands "do" a great deal both for consumers and sellers. In developing and understanding the utility of brands, and by extension employment brands, it is important to understand the presumed choice environment in which consumers make purchasing decisions. The field of consumer psychology presumes consumers are making decisions much more complicated than the binary decisions of choosing between two similar products or choosing to purchase or not purchase a particular product. Given a vector of needs and/or wants to be satisfied, consumers face an enormous number of competing choices and products. Nearly all wants can be satisfied with solutions from multiple product categories. A consumer simply wanting to relieve itchiness on their back torso could choose among mechanical back scratchers, DVD-based programs on arm and back stretching to better reach the itch, over the counter or prescribed cream and pills, and for some conditions, intradermal injections of the botulinum toxin (Botox) in the affected area (Weinfeld, 2007). In addition, consumers usually face a number of choices within each product category. A consumer seeking to travel from Cincinnati, OH to Memphis, TN via rented automobile has several rental companies and automobile brands from which to choose. Consumers must also frequently decide whether to continue the use of known products or make an intra- or interproduct category switch. Complicating this highly complex choice environment, consumers face costs for the acquisition of product utility information, ambiguity about the risks and benefits of each competing choice, information-processing limitations, bounded rationality, and an imperfect understanding of their own needs and wants (Keller, 2008; Swait & Adamowicz, 2001).

Amid this backdrop of overwhelming choice and human limitation, brands simplify consumers' decision making and allow sellers to communicate the utility of their offerings and distinguish them from competitors both within and across product categories. At the simplest level, brands identify for consumers the source or producer of the product. Faced with a myriad of restaurant choices near an unfamiliar highway off-ramp, brands that identify the available restaurants helps consumers distinguish among the offerings thus simplifying choice. Information about the product or service associated with the brand reduces search costs, reduces the perceived risks of the purchase decision, and increases the confidence consumers place in their final decision. In short, brands allow consumers to confidently make perceived better decisions with significantly less thought (Broyles, Schumann, & Leingibbul, 2009; Keller, 2008).
Brands also provide utility to consumers during and after consumption. Brands serve as symbolic devices that allow consumers to communicate both to others and themselves the type of person they are or would like to be (Berthon et al., 1999; Keller, 2008). Shoppers purchasing groceries from one of the Whole Foods Market chain of stores communicate to themselves and others that they aspire to be socially responsible, health-conscious, and are sufficiently wealthy to pay premium prices for organic and “natural” goods that are scientifically indistinguishable from their nonorganic cousins (Goodchild, 2009). Consumers are personally rewarded when their brand choice reinforces their aspirational identity and signals this identity to others (Berthon et al., 1999).

For sellers, brands allow them to help consumers identify and re-identify their goods and services. When promoting specific products, brands allow sellers to create an identity for what would ordinarily be a commodity thus reducing consumer search costs. The differentiation brands create for products in the minds of consumers allows the seller to charge a price premium above what can be charged for generic products or commodities. Finally, brands allow sellers to communicate consistent messages about products’ intangible and tangible benefits thus facilitating customer segmentation (Berthon et al., 1999; Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

**Concept of Employment Brand**

One may reasonably wonder whether the concept of product/service brand can be fruitfully mapped over to the concept of employment brand. As defined earlier, a *brand* is a symbolic representation of goods and services that allows sellers to distinguish, in the minds of consumers, their products from competitors. In the marketing literature, the consumer is the actual or prospective purchaser of products while the seller is the party offering products for sale (AMA, 2010). In the employment domain, it is the employer that is the actual or prospective purchaser of a worker’s labor while the worker sells their talents, energies, commitment, and willingness to submit to the employer’s work processes (Budd & Bhave, 2009; Garner, 2004, p. 564; Garrow, 1994; Kaufman, 2004). If in employment transactions the worker is the seller and the employer is the consumer the brand concept might be inappropriate to apply to employers and employment but relevant for workers hoping to distinguish themselves in the minds of prospective employers. The job search section of any bookstore has a range of books advising job searchers how to create successful worker brands (e.g., Bence, 2009).

One of the primary contributions of this chapter is to suggest that greater progress can be made in the study of employment branding by shifting the theoretical foundation from OB and I/O psychology to consumer psychology. At first glance, positioning workers as consumers of employment offerings may seem nothing more than a minor shift. Although this repositioning is consistent with the classical perspective of labor markets, it is inconsistent with the labor system tradition and is a shift with previous reviews of the employment branding literature.

The classical perspective emphasizes a perfectly competitive labor market where many agents conduct labor transactions under conditions of full information and few barriers to movement (Arrow, 1973). Forces of market competition determine the supply of and demand for labor, which is bought and sold freely as a commodity. Workers and firms are assumed to have perfect information and can move freely in response to changes in supply and demand in different parts of the market. Hence, the market for labor resembles the exchange market for many goods and services. Human capital theory (Becker, 1964) emphasizes differences among people, rather than among jobs, as determinant of recruitment/employment opportunities in the general labor market (Spence, 1974). Individuals are assumed to survey the lifetime opportunities open to them and exchange their labor services for the optimal employment opportunity.

In the labor system tradition, labor markets are conceived as arenas in which workers exchange their labor power in return for a wage in order to live. Capitalists are the “buyers” in these transactions and control that labor within the labor process (Wright, 1980). Moreover, institutional theory posits that labor markets are “dual” or “stratified” (Fiore, 1969). The labor market is understood as divided into various segments or strata, each of which can be identified by a characteristic set of wages, working conditions, opportunities for advancement, and level of turnover. Job opportunities vary along these strata and because of the existence of barriers; workers in one stratum are impeded to move to another more desirable one. Workers’ do not choose or “purchase” employment opportunities but may participate in a limited set of labor strata whose opportunities are highly constrained by the employee choices made by employers.

We fully recognize legitimate components of both perspectives. The framework we propose for employment branding builds on assumptions consistent with the classical tradition. Although some employers in some industries treat labor and thus workers as commodities, from the U.S. Colonial era to the present time employers have competed with each other to hire and retain the best talent for jobs of all levels of complexity (Prude,
1983; Tam & Woo, 2011). Given this competition for talent (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998), we view workers not as passive vessels of undifferentiated labor waiting to be “purchased” by employers but as cognitive and emotional beings (Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001) that vary in the components and quality of talents and with their own vectors of preferences for employment, location, pay, and perquisites. Given a sufficiently large number of applicants, and a low selection ratio, modern selection techniques allow nearly all firms to identify applicants with the highest level of desired skills. Acquiring these skills requires firms to attract a large number of autonomous applicants and for the best applicant to freely choose the organization’s employment offering (Phillips & Gully, 2009).

Employment branding researchers have three broad theoretical frameworks from which to study this phenomenon. One option is the frameworks used to examine how people choose from among employment options (Schwab et al., 1987). This broad based research stream focuses on how job seekers search for, evaluate, and choose from among existing employment opportunities. After reviewing this literature, we concluded that the focus on active job seekers and existing job openings would not be the best fit as employment branding is concerned with how workers searching or not searching for employment process and respond to information about symbols that represent abstract employment offerings. The second option is to use a hybrid of the marketing and job search literatures. Cable and Turban (2001) used such a hybrid model in their review of the employer brand knowledge literature. This approach, which is used by many of the studies reviewed in this chapter, focuses on how job seekers store and use information about organizations to make application, interview, and job acceptance decisions. Employer attributes and associations, while important drivers of employment search and acceptance behavior are but a small component of individuals’ total brand knowledge (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

Consumer psychology is the study of “the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior, and environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives” (Peter & Olson, 2005, p. 5). By simply recognizing employment as an exchange between workers and employers, we concluded that grounding our employment branding framework in the existing theories of consumer psychology was superior to adapting job search and I/O recruitment theories to the employment exchange context.

Before offering our definition of employment brand we want to address the semantic issue of whether the term “employer brand” or “employment brand” is most appropriate. Employer brand is clearly the most commonly used term. A full-text search of EBSCOhost’s “Business Source Premier” resulted in 1,258 articles using the terms “employer brand/ing” and only 429 using the terms “employment brand/ing.” A commonly cited definition of employer brand is “the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company” (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p. 187). A 2001 Conference Board report defined employer brand as “the identity of the firm as an employer” (Dell, Ainspan, Bodenbent, Troy, & Hickey, 2001, p. 10). Neither definition is consistent with the concept of “brand” as discussed in mainstream marketing literature the frameworks of which we are using to structure this chapter. For the reasons discussed later, we have chosen to use the term employment brand.

Brands are generally thought of as identifying and differentiating the goods and services of a seller (Keller, 1993, p. 2). In the employment context, “goods and services” would be employment — what the employer offers in exchange for workers’ efforts and how their physical, mental, and emotional energies are deployed while working. Ambler and Barrow’s (1996) and Dell et al.’s (2001) definitions focus on the employment-related information associated with the corporate brand (Keller, 2005). This is a legitimate and useful perspective when trying to create and manage a corporate identity in the minds of its many stakeholders (Brown & Dacin, 1997). Our interest is the identity or brand of the product — employment — in the minds of current and potential workers and how workers’ knowledge structures associated with the employment brand affect their response to the marketing of the brand (Keller, 1993). Take for example employment as a programmer at Microsoft. We are not directly interested in Microsoft’s identity and reputation as an employer; in other words, the employment information stakeholders associate with the Microsoft Corporation. We instead are interested in “Microsoft” as a symbol that provides identity to employment offerings and how information associated with “Microsoft” as an employment brand symbol affects workers’ responses to the marketing of their programming job. Borrowing heavily from Keller (1993) we define employment brand as “names, terms, signs, symbols, or designs or a combination of them intended to identify the employment offering of one employer and to differentiate it from the offerings of competing employers.”

Employment brands, like product brands help workers make perceived better decisions about beginning, ending, and continuing employment transactions with less thought. Several scholars have noted that consumers rely more on brands when making service purchase decisions than product
purchase decisions due to the intangibility of and variance in quality of services (Berry, 2000; Keller, 2008). We suggest that for most individuals, employment brands are more important when making employment decisions than product brands are when making purchasing decisions due to the importance of work in human life, the intensive trading of “self” for employment offerings, and the intangibility and uncertain quality of the employment product before beginning employment.

Understanding individuals’ feelings and knowledge of employment offerings is important because work is important to most people. In discussing the centrality of work to the human experience, Kelloway et al. (2004) noted that work is metaphorically presented as the purpose of humanity in one of the most influential accounts of the origin of the human species. Genesis 2:15 reads: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Work, beyond the activity required to gain food and shelter, has been a fundamental component of the human condition since prehistoric times (Arendt, 1958: Donkin, 2001). People, Americans in particular, generally work even when they are not required to do so. Beyond providing the means for self and family survival and comfort, work provides status, personal identity, and opportunities for social interaction (Kelloway et al., 2004). Several studies show that 90% or more of American big prize lottery winners continue to work for another person or organization even when they have sufficient funds not to do so. Surveys of the U.S. population show the vast majority of Americans agree they would continue to work if lottery winnings made employment unnecessary (Arvey, Harpaz, & Liao, 2004; Hightouse, Zieckar, & Yankelevich, 2010; Kaplan, 1985).

Worker transactions with employers require more than the exchange of discrete resources, they involve the constant presence and exchange of “self” (Goffman, 1959). Karl Marx’s (1906) treatise Capital makes this exchange quite explicit. He states, a worker sets “in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body ...” (p. 198) in order to create products and services of value. More than just passively thinking or providing physical labor, workers must constantly use the self to will the body and mind to act in accordance with the employer’s needs. He writes, “Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the [labor] process and that, during the whole operation, the workman’s will be steadily in consonance with his purpose ...” (Marx, 1906, p. 198). Hochschild (1983) extended this insight by pointing out that workers’ expenditure of mental energy also includes the self-control, suppression, and coordination of internal emotions and the public facial and bodily display of observable emotions. “This type of [emotional] labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality” (p. 7).

Before forming an employment relationship, workers generally have very limited knowledge of the tangible and intangible resources to be gained from the prospective employment exchange. For most workers in modern industrialized economies, the employment relationship is an open-ended transaction; details emerge only as time passes and relevant contingencies arise. When a worker accepts employment, the job duties six months or six years hence are not fully specified. Specifics about future salary, promotions, training, recognition, etc. are purposefully left vague (Baron & Kreps, 1999, p. 62). Intangibles such as equity, voice, dignity, purposeful activity, personal fulfillment, status, identity, and social relations, are inapposable (Budd & Bhave, 2009). Employment brands fill in these gaps and allow potential workers to efficiently make perceived better decisions and feel more confident in their decisions after making them.

**Proposition 1a.** Workers rely more on employment brands when making employment decisions than when making consumer product and service decisions.

**Proposition 1b.** The role of employment brands is more important in making employment decisions (i) the greater the importance work plays in a person’s identity; (ii) the more the “self” in the form of physical, mental, and emotional labor is required as a medium of exchange in the employment relationship; and (iii) the greater the uncertainty of and variability in attributes of the employer’s employment offering.

**Consumer-Based Brand Equity**

As we have mentioned several times earlier, a brand is something that resides in the minds of individuals that identifies a good or service. The marketing literature grounds this thinking on standard models of human memory. These theoretical models posit that information is stored as bundles of information in the brain as ‘nodes.’ Nodes are connected to one another via links of varying strength. When a node is activated via the recall or encoding process, other nodes linked to the activated nodes are also activated and their information recalled depending on the strength of the connection between them. This information then becomes available for use. Thus, a node becomes a potential source of activation of other nodes either
when new information is coded or retrieved from memory (Collins & Stevens, 2002, p. 1122; Keller, 1993).

Consider the example of a person contemplating purchasing donuts. A person may think of Krispy Kreme branded donuts because of their strong association with the donut product category (Doornar, 2004). The consumer’s knowledge associated with the Krispy Kreme donut brand should also come to mind: the light and fluffy texture; sweetness; and the sensation of the donut melting in the mouth. The knowledge associated with the brand could come from personal experience, word of mouth, or advertising. Thus brand knowledge is conceptualized as the memory node containing brand identity information to which other nodes of information about the brand are linked (Keller, 1993; Shocker, Ben-Akiva, Coccara, & Nedungadi, 1991).

The broad set of knowledge associated with a brand is assumed to have two dimensions, brand familiarity and brand attitude. Brand familiarity is the strength of the brand identity node in consumers’ memory. It is manifested as (1) recognition when the brand name is given and (2) the likelihood the brand name will come to the consumer’s memory when considering a purchase from a specific product category (Brown & Wildt, 1992). If a consumer decided she needed to travel from Salt Lake City to Nashville, what is the likelihood Southwest Airlines would come to mind? Brand attitude, the second dimension of brand knowledge, is conceptualized as a summary of the totality of memory node associations, with meaning, held by consumers about the brand. These associations include direct and indirect benefits from the product or service. Each attribute and benefit can be described in terms of its favorability, strength, and uniqueness (Keller, 1993).

Consumers with brand familiarity and a positive brand attitude linked to the brand respond differently to marketing efforts than consumers lacking such mental structures. The differential response may be behavioral, increased attention and interest, deeper evaluation, pre- and post-consumption satisfaction, and ultimately greater purchase probability. Marketers call this attentional and behavioral bias “customer-based brand equity.” A brand has positive customer-based brand equity when consumers react more favorably to a product and the way it is marketed when identified with a brand than when it is not. Imagine two separate groups of individuals. One group is told they have won a cruise to Alaska; the other group is told they have won a Royal Caribbean cruise to Alaska. The group told the name of the branded cruise line will respond more vigorously to the announcement than the group told they have won a generic cruise (Fairecloth, Capella, & Alford, 2001). Keller (2008, p. 50) recounts a beer taste testing with two different subject groups. Both groups tasted six different beers, one of which was Guinness, a strong tasting, dark beer. One group was told the names of the beers they tasted; the other group was not. The group that knew the names of the beers detected significant differences in taste among the beers across multiple dimensions. The group not told the names identified Guinness as very different from the other five but identified virtually no differences among the five remaining beers. The perceived taste distinctions made by the individuals given the names of the beers were a manifestation of brand equity, a function of the brand familiarity and the brand attitudes linked to the beer brands.

**Worker-Based Employment Brand Equity**

The focus of this chapter, of course, is worker-based employment brand equity (WBEBE). Workers have in their memories a variety of distinct employment brands identifying and distinguishing various employment offerings. Associated with these employment brands are two dimensions of employment brand knowledge: (1) employment brand familiarity — the strength of the employment brand node in the worker’s memory. Brand knowledge is also manifest as (2) employment brand attitude — the attitude directed toward the brand summarizing individuals’ understanding of the attributes of the employment offering and the perceived utility of these attributes. Fig. 1 summarizes the WBEBE model and serves as an outline for the remainder of this chapter.

Employment brand knowledge, composed of employment brand familiarity and employment brand attitude, is best understood as a formative rather than reflective variable. Classical test theory assumes that items of a variable are intercorrelated, and imperfect reflections of an underlying latent construct and thus considered a reflective measure. Measures sometimes do not represent reflections of latent constructs but instead combine to form the latent construct. Such formative measures are viewed as "causing" the latent construct; the items are not assumed to co-vary (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Jarvis, 2005). Employment brand knowledge is not the empirical representation of an underlying latent construct but instead, employment brand attitude and employment brand familiarity combine to create the construct (Keller, 1993).

Employment brand knowledge results in WBEBE, defined as the manifestation of the differential effects that employment brand knowledge has on workers’ responses to the marketing of that employment brand.
Positive WBEBE is the manifestation of favorable worker responses to an employment offering and the way it is marketed when the offering is identified with a brand than when it is not (Keller, 1993, p. 2). When a recruiter approaches a happily engaged employee at another firm, a job opportunity identified with a brand with positive employment brand knowledge will be more carefully considered and more actively pursued than a generic job opportunity or a job opportunity without positive brand knowledge. When a star employee is slighted by the regional vice president and decides to seek alternative employment, he is more likely, without prompting, to think of unadvertised employment opportunities associated with robust employment brand knowledge structures in his memory than brands without such knowledge structures. Finally, when the star MBA finance graduate is choosing among multiple job offers, she is likely to accept the position with the most positive employment brand knowledge in her memory nodes.

Employment Brand Knowledge

The two dimensions of employment brand knowledge discussed earlier are employment brand familiarity and employment brand attitude. Brand knowledge resides in workers’ associative memory structures and is a direct function of their stored experiences with the brand. These experiences can be in the form of direct and indirect contact with the employment brand. For instance, many companies maintain databases of high performing former employees for future recruiting and hiring (Hirschman, 2000). These former employees’ employment brand knowledge is based on their direct experiences as an employee. Word-of-mouth from current or former employees is an indirect source of employment brand knowledge. In the past, indirect sources would have been a limited set of information drawn from workers’ family and social networks. With today’s social media, blogs, and other sources of first-hand information from employees, word of mouth information is a critical source of brand knowledge (Dutta & Fraser, 2009). Firms’ marketing efforts to communicate employment brand information is another source of workers’ information. This can be in the form of explicit communications of open positions or employment branding efforts by the firm to create knowledge structures in potential workers for future recruiting (Brandt & Shook, 2005; Faircloth et al., 2001). The Crete Carrier trucking company has an advertisement on the back end of their semi-trailer trucks that reads "SATISFIED DRIVER SIXTY-THREE FEET AHEAD." This
advertisement is designed to create the image of a satisfied driver and associate it with Crete Carrier as an employment brand. Finally, as will be discussed in more depth later, employment brand knowledge is derived from workers' experiences with firms' corporate and product brands (Collins, 2007). For instance, workers with robust product and corporate brand knowledge of the Union Pacific rail company will have a level of employment brand familiarity and attitude linked to Union Pacific as an employment brand as well. In the following sections, we will review the components, consequences, and the antecedents of employment brand knowledge placing special emphasis on what firms do to manage this knowledge.

Employment Brand Knowledge: Brand Familiarity and Brand Attitudes

Brand Familiarity
Workers making employment search, pursuit, and acceptance decisions behave like consumers making purchase decisions. In one decision path there is a recognized need for employment. This might be a proactive need on the part of a currently employed person for new employment or the need of an unemployed person to find work. The person searches their memory as well as published company listings for firms to which they might submit unsolicited applications. They also use a variety of sources of job postings to find and submit applications to advertised openings. In the second decision path, the person, employed or unemployed, is approached directly and encouraged to apply for an open position by a representative for the employer. As aforementioned, 20–80% of all workers who move from one job to another do so after receiving an unsolicited offer to interview (Fallick & Fleischman, 2001; Lee et al., 2008). We will use the two employment paths to better explain the concept of employment brand familiarity.

Individuals seeking an employment opportunity can only theoretically consider the available set of employment brands - brands that exist and for which there might be actual employment opportunities. From the available set of employment brands, the awareness set includes the set of brands which the worker is aware. The worker then examines and processes information about a subset of the awareness set resulting in the processed set and the unprocessed set of employment brands. Employment brands in the processed set are categorized as acceptable alternatives, rejected alternatives, or those put on hold - not further considered for employment opportunities. The employment brands considered acceptable alternatives, called the consideration set, are more fully analyzed and the person makes the decision to apply and interview, and if offered a position, accept (Brisoux & Cheron, 1990; Brown & Wildt, 1992; Posavac, Sanbonmatsu, Cronley, & Kardes, 2001). For the decision to apply for openings, the worker is only constrained by their time and energy available to submit applications. For interview and job choice decisions workers, like consumers, are limited to considering brands for which they have the sufficient personal resources to exchange for the employment opportunity.

Consistent with the marketing literature, we propose that employment brand familiarity is composed of two empirical manifestations: (1) employment brand recognition, manifest as workers' ability to confirm exposure to the employment brand when the brand name is given as a cue. A sample question partially representing this construct might be “I have seen or heard information” regarding jobs at [insert employment brand name]. And (2) employment brand recall, manifest as workers’ ability to recall the brand from memory when given different employment contexts as a cue. For instance, a student might be asked, “List the brands identifying jobs filled by students from this college in your major.” A worker might be asked “Name as many employment brands for jobs that you would qualify for that located in the tri-county area” (Keller, 1993, 2008).

Keller (1993) argued that brand recognition is most important when consumers make choices with available brand identification; for example when a consumer must choose between soda brands in the grocery store aisle. Greater familiarity with the brand, even independent of brand attitude, leads to affinity for the brand, which leads to brand choice (Shocker et al., 1991). Keller argued that brand recall is most important for memory-based choices; making a decision in the absence of brand stimuli. For example, thinking of a restaurant at which to eat after pulling the car out of the driveway (Posavac et al., 2001). We argue that both components of familiarity are important for employment brands. Obviously, brand recognition plays an important role in workers' decisions to apply to employment advertisements (Collins, 2007; Knox & Freeman, 2006). Brand recognition also likely plays a critically important role in workers' decisions to pursue opportunities presented via unsolicited offers to interview. Owing to the proliferation of corporate web pages and the associated capability of submitting applications and resumes on-line, unsolicited applications represent a growing and important proportion of companies' applicant pools (Henneman & Judge, 2009, chapter 5). Self-referred employees perform better and have longer tenures than employees prompted to apply by employment adverts (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000). We are not aware of
research on the thought process by which such workers submit unsolicited applications but it seems likely this behavior represents more of a memory-based rather than stimulus-based choice making employment brand recall an important precursor of this behavior (Posavac et al., 2001).

**Proposition 2a.** Employment brand familiarity is positively associated with workers' decisions to apply for advertised employment opportunities.

**Proposition 2b.** Employment brand familiarity is positively associated with workers' decisions to pursue unsolicited offers to interview.

**Proposition 2c.** Employment brand familiarity is positively associated with workers' decision to submit unsolicited applications for employment.

**Brand Attitude**

Consumers maintain information about brands in their memory. The informational nodes linked to the brand are called brand associations. These include attributes, benefits, images, feelings, sensory impressions, etc. In short, all of the signals emitted by the brand and retained in consumer memory (Faircloth et al., 2001). Owing to human information processing and memory limitations, consumers cannot retrieve, process, and utilize all the factual and affective brand associations at any one time and thus rely on attitudes to facilitate the storage and retrieval information associated with brands (Faircloth et al., 2001). Attitudes, defined by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 6) as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object," function as information simplifying heuristics for the information stored about each brand. The result is that the constellation of information and feelings associated with each brand is manifest as a brand attitude summarizing the information stored about the brand in memory. Spears and Singh (2004) define a brand attitude as the "attitude toward the brand that is a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation of the brand that presumably energizes behavior" (p. 55). The authors are clear to specify brand attitude as a "summary evaluation" to distinguish it from the evaluative expression of attitudes in the form of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors (p. 55). Dozens of studies suggest that brand attitude leads to brand intentions which lead to brand choice (Spears & Singh, 2004).

Borrowing heavily from Spears and Singh (2004, p. 55) we define employment brand attitude as an "attitude toward the employment brand that is a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation of the brand that presumably energizes job search, pursuit, and acceptance behavior." Employment brand attitude summarizes the information stored in memory that is associated with the brand. Reviewing and integrating two decades of research Spears and Singh (2004) developed and validated a new measure of brand attitude that could easily be adapted to employment brand. Using a semantic differential scale, consumers rate the brand as appealing/unappealing, bad/good, unpleasant/pleasant, unfavorable/favorable, and unlikeable/likeable. We suggest one of the most fruitful avenues of future research in employment branding is the creation and validation of a measure of employment brand attitude.

**Proposition 3.** Employment brand attitude is constructively associated with workers' differential responses to employment brand information. This includes (a) attention and learning about an employment brand; (b) interpretation and evaluation of an employment brand; and (c) intentions, decisions, and behaviors toward the brand.

**CONSEQUENCES OF EMPLOYMENT BRAND KNOWLEDGE DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE TO MARKETING EFFORTS**

Hoeffler and Keller (2003) distinguish between three types of attentional and behavioral biases consumer exhibit in response to positive brand knowledge. These are (1) attention and learning about the brand; (2) interpretation and evaluation of the brand; and (3) behaviors and decisions regarding the brand. Below, we will briefly explain each and propose analogues for the employment brand context. Throughout this chapter we will be using the term "strong brand" by this we mean brands with well-developed brand knowledge structures in the minds of potential and actual consumers: high brand familiarity and strong, positive, and unique associations with the brand. For instance, we would suggest that the IKEA brand is a strong brand in that furniture consumers are familiar with it and have generally positive associations (In IKEA we trust, 2009).

**Attention and Learning about the Employment Brand**

As discussed earlier, the mechanism by which strong brands produce the differential consumer responses to marketing efforts is rooted in theories of
associative memory. Building on this framework, marketers suggest that strong brands have two advantages when it comes to the attention paid to the brand and the information retained. First, consumers are more likely to involuntarily notice and process information about brands with which they are familiar. Second, strong brands have memory-encoding advantages over weak brands. Consumers already have the knowledge structures in place to add new information and information about the brand is more likely to be noticed from the informational clutter. Building on what we know about consumers, we should expect that workers will more readily pay attention to and learn more about existing, robust employment brands relative to the attention paid to and learning about employment brands with less developed knowledge structures (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003, pp. 423–424).

Barber (1998) began to address these issues in her review of the job choice literature. She looked at the limited, mostly practitioner literature on how to attract the attention and motivate application behavior of job seekers (pp. 38–45). Recent research continues to examine what stimuli grab the attention of and motivates this population (Walker, Field, Giles, & Bernerth, 2008). The employment branding perspective used in this chapter broadens the population from job seekers to all workers, employed or not, seeking for employment alternatives or not. This perspective broadens the information domain from job advertisements to all employment information.

Consistent with the consumer branding literature, employment brands with positive employment brand knowledge should result in increased attention to employment information provided by the employer or received from indirect sources such as former employees, social media, and the popular press; better comprehension of employment information, whatever the source; more positive reactions to employment information; better remembering of employment information; and greater willingness among passive and active job seekers to listen to recruiters' information provided about job opportunities (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Johnson & Russo, 1984; Kent & Allen, 1994; Lehmann & Pan, 1994; Simonson, Huber, & Payne, 1988).

Proposition 4. Greater employment brand knowledge, manifest as positive employment brand attitude associated with the brand and greater employment brand familiarity will result in greater attention and learning about the employment brand. This includes greater attention to, recall of, and comprehension employment information as well as favorable reaction to employment information.

Rebranding Employment Branding

Interpretation and Evaluation of the Employment Brand

Following the learning and coding of brand information, brand knowledge is associated with more positive interpretations and evaluation of brand information (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). It appears there are two processes that drive these outcomes, direct and indirect effects. As a direct effect, positive brand attitude leads to more positive evaluations of the brand (Brown & Stayman, 1992). Similarly, more developed brand knowledge structures increase confidence in the brand leading to more positive interpretations and evaluations (Dacin & Smith, 1994). As an indirect effect, greater brand knowledge increases consumers' confidence in the legitimacy of the product or service thus increasing positive evaluations (Erdem, 1998).

We should expect to see a positive association between employment brand knowledge and the positive interpretation and evaluation of a brand. Translating some of the marketing outcomes into employment outcomes we might expect to see employment brand knowledge to be constructively associated with perceptions of employment quality (Wernerfelt, 1988), perceived risks of the employment decision (Ailawadi, Lehmann, & Nelson, 2003; Broyles et al., 2009), pre- and post-choice confidence in the decision (Dacin & Smith, 1994; Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996), decreased decision difficulty (Mushukrishnan, 1995), and increased post-acceptance loyalty, satisfaction, and commitment to the employment offering (Agrawal, 1996; Berry, 2000; Broyles et al., 2009).

Proposition 5. Greater employment brand knowledge, manifest as positive employment brand attitude associated with the brand and greater employment brand familiarity will result in more positive interpretations and evaluations of employment brand information. This includes lower perceived risks with the employment decision, pre- and post-decision confidence, decreased decision difficulty, and increased post-choice loyalty, commitment, and satisfaction.

Intentions, Decisions, and Behaviors Regarding the Employment Brand

The broad message of the employment brand equity model outlined in Fig. 1, suggests that employment brand knowledge ultimately leads to workers' intentions, decisions, and behaviors toward the brand and that this process is mediated by consumers' attention and learning about the employment brand and their interpretation and evaluation of the employment brand. In short,
employment brand knowledge leads to increased learning, positive evaluations, increased brand intentions, and finally brand choice.

The vast majority of the research classified as focusing on employment brand focuses on modeling the antecedents of job pursuit and job choice of active job seekers (Barber, 1998; Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). Thus, the intentional and behavioral dependent variables from this literature correspond nicely to the consumer branding variables (Broyles et al., 2009). Relevant outcomes include intention to apply (Herriot & Rothwell, 1981), intention to interview (Barber, 1998), intention to accept (Powell & Goulet, 1996), decision to apply and interview (Barber & Roehling, 1993), and decision to accept (Cable & Judge, 1996). Considering the importance of word-of-mouth information about a brand plays in consumer and worker behavior (Van Hove & Lievens, 2009), willingness to recommend an employment brand to others would seem to be an important behavioral consequence of employment brand knowledge (Libai, Muller, & Peres, 2009).

**Proposition 6.** Greater employment brand knowledge, manifest as positive employment brand attitude associated with the brand and greater employment brand familiarity will be positively associated with intentions, decisions, and behaviors regarding the brand. This includes intentions to apply, interview, and accept; decisions to apply, interview, and accept; and willingness to recommend an employment brand.

**ATTRIBUTES OF THE EMPLOYMENT OFFERING**

As discussed earlier, nearly all of the scholarly work on employment branding is "inspired" by marketing and consumer psychology-based research but is fully grounded and structured by the field I/O psychology. The research on attributes of the employment offering reviewed below is no exception. We do our best to frame this research in the marketing and consumer psychology model of employment brand outlined in Fig. 1 but due to the nature of the research must resort to interpreting what has been done using the endogenous I/O psychology framework.

The extant employment branding literature has identified various components of employment attributes related with pay, opportunities for advancement, location, career programs, and organizational structure (Lievens, Hoey, & Schreurs, 2005; Backhaus, Stone, & Heiner, 2002; Knox & Freeman, 2006). However, most studies in the employment branding (EB) field tend to mix various attributes without necessarily making theoretical distinctions. In order to offer a more parsimonious framework and clarity, we differentiate between directly and indirectly related employment attributes. Directly related descriptive features involves the actual work attributes such as pay, opportunities for advancement and job security, whereas research on indirectly related employment attributes that are still part of the employment but not specific to the work itself. This includes the culture, coworker affiliations, structure of the organization, etc. Table 1 summarizes various directly and indirectly related employment attributes we identify in the extant employment branding literature below.

Although the notion of employment branding is influenced by the marketing discipline, research on employer attributes has its roots in the I/O

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directly related employment attributes</th>
<th>Career related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>Advancements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for advancement</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job security</td>
<td>Career programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social/team activities, physical activities</td>
<td>Opportunity to move around in the company and work in different roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>task diversity</td>
<td>Long-term career progression</td>
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<td>travel opportunities</td>
<td>Educational opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offers high starting salary</td>
<td>Apprentice program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offers scope for creativity in your work</td>
<td>Coworker affiliations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international travel</td>
<td>Employs people with whom you feel you have things in common</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities to work and live abroad</td>
<td>Competence of workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers variety in your daily work</td>
<td>Has an international diverse mix of colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires you to work standard hours only</td>
<td>High-quality incumbent workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with customers</td>
<td>Caring for their employees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regarded as prestigious employer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has a dynamic, forward-looking approach to their business</td>
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**Table 1.** Summary of Employment Branding Attributes Noted in the Literature.
psychology discipline in the context of worker satisfaction. This research has mapped out core employment attributes such as training, task variety, independence, and control that are broadly related to job satisfaction across a number of samples and populations (Barling, Kelloway, & Iverson, 2003). There is also research suggesting that satisfaction varies depending on the employment attributes. For example, workers may be satisfied with their jobs and the work itself (directly), and with their coworkers and supervisors (indirectly) but not satisfied with their employers’ opportunity for promotions (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Although research on satisfaction and employment attributes is useful for the EB research domain, it has generally focused on current employees and how directly related attributes impact current worker satisfaction. Largely ignored are potential workers outside the organization and what directly and indirectly related attributes may shape their employment brand knowledge.

Given the patterns in the satisfaction research, a natural starting point is compensation as a form of employment attribute. The satisfaction research suggests that pay correlates with job satisfaction but it is moderated by level of pay. That is, pay among workers living below poverty line is strongly linked with job satisfaction. However, once a worker reaches pay levels above $40,000 per year, this relationship seems to disappear (Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw, & Rich, 2010).

Drawing on the satisfaction literature (e.g., Dreher, Ash, & Bretz, 1988), researchers have offered additional insights as to the link between compensation and the employment brand knowledge of potential workers outside of the organization. For example, research has shown that both pay level and flexible benefits as forms of employment attributes may trigger different worker responses. Williams and Dreher (1992) explored the hiring process of bank tellers in 352 US banks. Their findings indicated that pay level was related to job acceptance rates but surprisingly unrelated to the number of teller applicants. In contrast to their predictions, higher pay did not result in more people applying for the job. This is consistent with the aforementioned finding that pay level is correlated with job satisfaction only at the lower pay levels. Moreover, in contrast to their predictions, pay level was positively related with length of time it took to fill a position. In other words, the more money offered for a job the longer the length of time to fill this vacancy. They speculated that this could be the result of banks having to increase salaries in order to attract external workers. Only flexible employment benefits tailored to the individual’s needs were related to job acceptance rate. The authors suggested that this could be the result of young women applying for these bank teller jobs that already have employed spouses but that benefits and flexible work arrangements better suited their current life situation at home.

Recent EB research has also found that pay may not be as important of an employment attribute for job acceptance among applicants. For example, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) explored five directly and indirectly related employment attributes among final year college students and bank employees. Findings indicated that of the five attributes, pay (directly related) was the least statistically significant as an attribute for organizational attractiveness. Other indirectly related attributes linked with organizational attractiveness were innovativeness \( r = .43 \), working with customers \( r = .41 \), advancements \( r = .40 \), and competence \( r = .38 \). Moreover, Lievens et al. (2005), studied both directly and indirectly employment attributes among potential job applicants for the armed forces (directly related: pay and benefits, task diversity, social/team activities, physical activities, travel opportunities; indirectly related: structure of the organization, opportunity for advancements, job security, and educational opportunities). However, results suggested that only task diversity and opportunity to work in team-based jobs impacted organizational attractiveness among a total of 576 high-school seniors. In other words, the findings seem to suggest that work-related attributes is more important than attributes related to the overall organization to influence worker response.

One reason as to why the other employment attributes was not significant may be due to the fact that the study only rated one organization at a time and did not considered the strength, favorability, and uniqueness of these attributes in relation with other organizations. That is, it seems likely that we would find differential responses among workers if we placed various compensation attributes in relation to other employer’s compensation and benefit packages. For example, if given a choice between two employers with different compensation and benefits, one might find that some workers may opt for flexible benefits rather than higher pay without such benefits (similar to Williams and Dreher’s (1992) logic above). Moreover, a job applicant may compare two companies’ retirement plan and accept a job offer based on the company’s 401-K retirement plan with 6% matching contribution. One company may offer a generous college tuition reimbursement plan for a worker’s children, not offered by the other company. The point here is that the uniqueness of compensation attributes as a form of employment brand knowledge may play an important role in determining worker response. Moreover, Although Williams and Dreher (1992) did explore different competitive levels of compensation (low, mid, or high pay), scant research exist on how variable pay versus fixed pay, salary versus hourly rate
attention to organizational characteristics at a superficial level and operate as self-selection screening mechanisms, even without more specific information about the nature compensation.

Missing in the international EB research stream are studies exploring different workers' response to employment attributes and how they vary across cultures. Given the ongoing globalization and proliferation of communication information technology (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006), opportunities to work across national borders seems likely to impact potential worker responses. That is, some applicants might purposefully seek employment that allows for travel abroad. Although Lievens et al. (2005) offered some insights as to the relationship between organizational attractiveness and opportunity for international travel in a military context; he did not find any significant results. This result is limited to a military context and cohort that may not be applicable across different industries and generalizable among different age groups. More research is clearly needed.

As a conceptual starting point, scholars interested in employment branding in an international context, may turn to the international strategic human resource management (ISHRM) domain. This field has explored various success factors such as personality, language skills, prior international experience, self-selection that may impact expatriates success during an international assignment (for an extensive review see Caligiuri, Tarique, & Jacobs, 2009). The emphasis has been on selecting internal workers for international opportunities abroad (e.g., Tarique & Schuler, 2008; Caligiuri & Colakoglu, 2007). However, largely ignored is the importance of international assignments as an employment attribute to generate desired worker response from external workers (i.e., intentions to seek employment)? Many external workers seeking employment may find it appealing with opportunities to work for the company in a different country.

Drawing on the ISHRM literature, focusing on the individual, language skills, international experience, and open to experience would logically drive people to seeking job opportunities in companies that offer international work employment (Tarique & Schuler, 2008). In terms of employment attributes, directly related attributes about the nature of the job-specific type of occupations that could be transferable to an international context (e.g., software development) or international career opportunities may both drive positive worker response. Indirectly related employment attributes such as the organizational global structure and location of its subsidiaries might further drive worker response. Knowledge about the specific country (e.g., culture, history, and geography) in which the company is conducting business may further impact the likelihood of positive workers response. For example, for some workers, a company with a
subsidiary in Melbourne, Australia may be more appealing than a company with a subsidiary in Tallinn, Estonia depending on workers interests. Hence

**Proposition 8.** Worker characteristics such as being bilingual, holding international travel experience, and personality dimensions will drive positive worker response toward companies with international related employment attributes.

**Employment Imagery**

The idea of working at a company that has international work opportunities can also be tied to one's feelings one may experience, or imagery, associated with the visualization of working in a particular place. Consider this: you have just received a phone call from the University of Alaska. They have heard about your research and are offering a job. Apart from the directly related attributes such as pay and tenure requirements, we assume that one would visualize what it would be like to live and work in Alaska, an indirectly related employment attribute. That is, workers have images of what it would be like to work in a specific geographic location which contributes to forming employment brand knowledge.

Given the Alaska example earlier, a few scholars have included location as part of employment attributes but generally conceptualized it as the relative distance between work and worker's home (e.g., Highhouse, Hoffman, Greve, & Collins, 2002; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Although it is possible that one may visualize a potential commute between the home and the workplace, a more theoretically interesting issue is the worker's self-generated imagery of working at a different company which may or may not involve moving to a different location. However scant research exists that would fall in the category of employment imagery. One exception is Lievens et al.'s (2005) work on trait inferences. Drawing on Aaker's (1997) work on person-descriptive traits, Lievens and colleagues explored worker knowledge among applicants for the armed forces. They identified three relevant attributes associated with our notion of imagery: excitement (daring, exciting, and thrilling), cheerfulness (cheerful, friendly, and original) about the organization, and ruggedness (tough, rugged, and masculine). All three attributes seem to touch on the imagery of employment. With regard to excitement, it may relate to directly related attributes of work: do I expect the work to be exciting? How about my coworkers, will they create excitement for my work and at the workplace? In terms of cheerfulness, is the workplace cheerful? Are people happy at work and would I feel the same way? As for ruggedness, the imagery could involve workers' imagery of handling weapons, driving military equipment, spending time in nature, much of which can be seen in military branding recruitment commercials. Lievens and colleagues' work suggest that both excitement and cheerfulness are important imaginary employment attributes that explains workers' attraction to military organizations.

We believe the notion of employment imagery is a promising one for future EB research. Worker imagery seems to play an important role while entertaining employment opportunities. Relating employment imagery to employment attributes, scholars may further map out both directly and indirectly related imagery. For example, drawing on Lievens and colleagues' work, employment imagery as a directly related employment attribute can be related to the work itself (e.g., what would it be like to work with this boss?) or the indirectly, (e.g., would I be happy working in this company?). It is conceivable that various forms of employment imagery can have significant impact on building employment brand knowledge. However, as highlighted in the Alaska example earlier, employment imagery may extend outside the workplace itself and include location attributes. For example, I may visualize living in Alaska and imageries that may come to mind could be scenic views, cross-country skiing and impressive white water rivers. It may also trigger visualizations of brutally cold and dark days, endless snow shoveling, and dead car batteries. However, this line of research is, to our knowledge, a wide open field for future scholarly inquiries. Researchers may find it fruitful to explore the differential impact regarding various forms of worker imagery as outlined earlier. Worker imagery as it relates to both directly and indirectly employment attributes and nonemployment attributes, is a key component for building employment brand knowledge and impacting worker employment response. Hence

**Proposition 9.** Worker self-generated employment imagery will be positively associated with employment brand knowledge and workers' responses to employment brand information.

**Organization Culture**

Organizational culture, defined as a system of shared values and beliefs (Schein, 1985), can in many ways be seen as part of an employment brand (Bergstrom, Blumenthal, & Crothers, 2002). A number of studies have focused on the importance of organization culture from an internal brand-building
Organizational culture can shape worker values and commitment to the organization, and scholars have embraced the role of the human resource management function as a supporting mechanism to further drive culture-related initiatives (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Miles & Mangold, 2004; Sheridan, 1992). Others have placed culture in the corporate branding context. For example, similar to Turban and Keon (1993), Wheeler, Richey, Tokkman, and Sablynski (2006) explored the relationship between corporate brand identity and worker personality traits (need for achievement and self-esteem), organizational culture and worker turnover. Findings suggest that the need for achievement moderated the relationship between corporate brand identity and worker intent to remain employed with the organization. That is, the more an organization's brand stresses value-goal or cultural congruence, the more likely workers will embrace corporate culture post hire.

Organizational culture, as part of building employment brand knowledge among external workers, has been given much less attention. Similar to the internal branding research suggesting that organizational culture can operate as a retention mechanism, research on external workers indicates that culture can also function as an attraction mechanism. For example, Collins and Stevens (2002) found that conveying various directly and indirectly related employment attributes impacted the success of early recruitment efforts. Within this research domain, researchers have suggested that an organizational brand can influence workers' perception and ideas of the organization's culture, which may trigger favorable worker responses. Along similar lines, Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002) explored six well-known Silicon Valley firms and found that the strategic resource of an employer brand (corporate brand measured by reputation) could partially reflect external perception of culture. The organization's culture could in effect operate as mechanism for driving employment brand knowledge. Given the role of organizational culture in the context of employment branding, some organizations are actively attempting to alter their culture toward a market-driven culture tailored to appeal to its customer based, which would also include potential future employees (Ogbonma & Harris, 2002).

Although the extant EB research points out the potential strength of organization culture as an indirect employment attribute to attract workers, much more research is needed in this area. For example, as much as culture can be a source of strength, researchers may want to explore the downside of having a strong culture and how it manifests itself in worker's mind and links with their attention and learning, interpretation and evaluation, and decisions and behaviors. As a conceptual starting point, there is a large research domain on staffing focusing on worker-job and worker-organization fit issues for successful recruitment, maximizing worker performance, and improve retention (Winfred, Bell, Villado, & Doverspike, 2006; Yaniv & Farkas, 2005). In the context of organizational culture, we can translate the notion of worker/job/organization fit, to overall culture fit and subculture fit. Organizations generally have different subcultures linked with specific jobs within different departments - job-related subcultures. For example, the engineering department may hold a unique subculture, in part driven by worker's training and expertise, which may differ with the subculture in the sales department. To what extent these job-related subcultures may clash and interfere with the overall organizational culture resulting in differential worker response remains an empirical question. The answer may be the nature of the overall culture. On the one hand, we could postulate that strong overall cultures (a culture that is easily identifiable, widely shared, and perceived positive) may in fact override job-related subcultures triggering differential worker responses. That is, an engineer may accept a job offer based on the overall knowledge of the company's culture (e.g., it is perceived to be a social responsible culture). On the other hand, job-related subcultures may play a more important role for workers seeking employment in a context of a weak overall organizational culture. For example, the engineer may accept the job offer based on the subculture she experienced while visiting the engineering team she would work for (with little concerns about the company being social responsible). Thus, both worker/culture fit and worker/subculture fit may impact worker response:

**Proposition 10.** The employment attributes of overall organizational culture and job-related subcultures play important roles in worker responses to employment brand knowledge.

**ACTIVITIES USED TO DEVELOP WORKERS' EMPLOYMENT BRAND KNOWLEDGE**

Scholars have given ample attention to the tactics organizations use to develop potential workers’ employment brand knowledge. For the past 30 years or so, the focus of this research has been the impact of advertising and recruiting contact on applicants’ employment behaviors. These are still robust streams, but the current trend is to use an employment brand model
to consider several different means to impact employment brand knowledge and worker responses to employment opportunities.

**Advertisement Job Ads for Building Employment Brand Knowledge**

A number of papers have examined external workers’ early exposure to the organization through various forms of marketing advertisements. The focus on advertisement in the EB research stream is, in part, a result of a change from a manufacturing economy toward a knowledge-based one, which creates a need for organizations to differentiate themselves in the minds of workers with multiple employment options. Ewing, Pitt, Bussy, and Berthon (2002, p. 3) argues that “more and more firms may turn to advertisement to create ‘employment brands’ and thereby offer an enticing vocational proposition that is compelling and differentiated.”

Within this research stream, studies have suggested that the amount of information included in job ads coupled with the perceived company image trigger worker attitudes and differential worker responses. For example, Belt and Paolillo (1982), in their experimental study involving 218 undergraduate and graduate students, asked participants to rate restaurants on a 20 point image scale. The results suggested that the image of the organization impacted whether participants would read the recruitment ad and their intentions to follow through with a job application. However, no difference was found when they tested different students with different majors in their response to job ads. In addition to the image serving as an attention mechanism, Feldman, Dearden, and Hardesty (2006) found an association between the amount of information provided in recruitment ads and organizational attractiveness and the intent to follow through with a job application; the more information provided about the organization, the greater the attraction. They also found that participants who received more detailed information about the organization, job, and work context reported more positive attitudes toward both the advertisement and the organization.

Both Belt and Paolillo (1982) and later Feldman et al. (2006) studied how content and image of the company impacted worker attitudes. In contrast to Feldman and colleagues testing the attitudinal reactions to hypothetical ads, Belt and Paolillo (1982) concluded that workers are generally familiar with a large variety of organizations. A central, yet unexplored question in this research stream is how workers’ pre-existing employment brand attitudes interact with the content of recruitment ads to shape employment brand knowledge and subsequent worker responses. It is likely that organizational and job ads might trigger different worker responses contingent upon their existing employment brand attitudes. One worker might hold strong negative employment brand attitudes toward an organization’s attributes operating in the tobacco industry or their reputation for having strong antiunion management, or overall treatment of employees and working conditions. From an organizational interest, even if an organization can do little in the short run in terms of pre-existing worker attitudes, more practically, the concern turns to how organizations can alter and change negative worker attitudes about their organization into positive ones in order to attract talent. Hence

**Proposition 11.** Pre-existing worker attitudes moderate the relationship between content in job ads and employment attraction.

Important to note here, and relevant for the entire chapter, most studies linking employment brand antecedents with various worker responses, have been designed using convenience samples. Although we can clearly learn a lot from students considering entering the job market, we do not know how work experience influences reactions and attitudes toward job ads. Within this research limitation, qualitative research may add additional insights, especially on factors involving worker attitudes. Scholars may want to interview workers and unpack the dimensions of worker attitudes as they may impact employment brand knowledge and trigger differential worker responses. For example, having years of experience reading and applying to job ads may alter one’s expectation as to what should be presented in the job ad, which may influence attitudinal reactions and subsequently worker response. Moreover, different types of jobs with different salaries may further interact with content and worker attitudes. Some job ads may necessarily be more comprehensive given the nature of the job. We perceive a lot more exciting research can be conducted involving job ads based on different methodologies.

**Recruitment and Building Employer Brand Knowledge**

There is also established theoretical and empirical work in the larger recruitment domain (which includes job advertisement) focusing on the importance of conveying employment brand knowledge to attract potential job applicants (Behrend, Baker, & Thompson, 2009; Breauigh, 2008; Collins, 2007). Ferris, Berkson, and Harris (2002) in their review of the person-organization fit literature, outlined a prescriptive model which emphasizes
organizations' strategic efforts to maximize the acquisition of talent through interviewer persuasion. They highlighted the importance of nonwork-related issues, persuasive speech, total compensation, and interviewer characteristics. Moreover, they argued that an active promotion of organizational reputation rather than focusing on actual job attributes is a stronger recruitment tool. Part of the logic may be that workers do not stay in one position as they are promoted but work in the same organization during this career progression.

Empirical research supports the notion that organizations can take actions building employment brand knowledge in the recruitment process. Gatwood, Gowen, and Lautenschlager (1993) explored three different worker images (general corporate image, recruitment image, and correlates of images) and found support for the notion that these images are related to the information available about them. Interestingly, they noted that participants in their study had little agreement about the corporate (image of the name of an organization) and recruitment image (image associated with its recruitment message). Moreover, both corporate and recruitment images of the organization were strong predictors of initial decision to pursue contact with organizations (i.e., worker response). The practical implication of these findings is that organizations can build positive employment brand attitudes (via images) by simply communicating organizational and work-related attributes through ads, web pages, and other media.

Similar to research on job ads, important work has been done investigating the role of workers' attitudes and actions taken by organizations in recruitment to build employment brand knowledge. Using a sample of 1955 engineering students, Collins and Stevens (2002) explored how workers' employer brand image moderated positive exposure to four early recruitment-related activities (publicity, sponsorship, word-of-mouth endorsement, and advertisement) and applicant decisions to apply. In contrast to our conceptualization used in this chapter, they defined employer brand image as potential applicants' attitudes and perceived attributes about the job or organization (implicitly making a directly and indirectly related employment attribute distinction). In line with previous marketing research, results suggested that early recruitment-related activities were indirectly related with intentions to apply. Similar to advertisement-related research outlined earlier, workers' favorable impressions of the company (attitudes) and job attributes (salary, location, advancement opportunity, etc.) had a strong impact on workers' decision to apply when receiving information about the company through word-of-mouth endorsement. This suggests that the channel through which employment attributes are transmitted is critical for impacting workers' attitudes.

Adding to research on employment brand channels, Allen, Otando, and Mahlo (2007) focused specifically on the recruitment websites used to attract worker interest in the early recruitment stages. They reported that workers' attitudes toward the website (e.g., using this website is a satisfying experience) drove their attitudes toward organizations (e.g., in your opinion, how does this organization compare with other organizations of the same type and size?). Moreover, workers' attitudes toward organizations had a central role in moderating a series antecedents and outcomes; it mediated workers' perception of organizational familiarity (have you ever heard of this organization), organization image (rated by social responsibility), job information (e.g., how much employment or job opportunity-related information did the website provide compared with what you expected to find?), and organization information (how much information about the organization did the website provide compared with what you expected to find?) with the outcome of employment intention (what are the chances that you will pursue employment with this organization within the next 12 months?).

Although both Collins and Stevens' (2002) and Allen et al.'s (2007) studies highlight the importance of the channel through which workers acquire employment brand knowledge, we believe taking a closer look by making a distinction between directly and indirectly related employment attributes might add insights to this line of research. We know that the amount of information about employment attributes and word-of-mouth play key roles in impacting worker attitudes and possibly intentions to apply to a job. Extending this logic, it is conceivable that word-of-mouth as a channel would have an even stronger impact on indirectly related employment attributes and subsequent worker attitudes and worker response. Unless the word-of-mouth originates from the person being replaced, this person is more likely to have first-hand knowledge about the culture, work relations, leadership styles for instance, rather than the actual content of the job. Hence

Proposition 12. The effect of the channel used to transmit employment brand knowledge to workers is moderated by indirectly related employment attributes.
Organizations have also realized the power of leveraging their internal workforce as a mechanism to build employment brand knowledge among external workers (e.g., Bergstrom et al., 2002; Gapp & Merrilees, 2006; Harris, 2007; Miles & Mangold, 2004; Punjarsi & Wilson, 2007). A general trend in this line of research suggests a discrepancy between internal and external workers' employment brand knowledge of the organization (de Chernatony, Cottman, & Segal-Horn, 2006). For example, Knox and Freeman (2006) explored the impact of the employer brand image in the recruitment market (among potential recruits and their recruiters during the recruitment process). They offered a long list of employment attributes (e.g., freedom to work, friendly, informal culture, small organization really cares about their employees as individuals, uses your degree skills). Their study suggests that employment brand knowledge does positively correlate with graduate recruitment intentions, which is consistent with the general employment brand and employment ad research. More importantly here, their findings also suggested that there are significant perceptual differences between recruiters and job applicants with respect to employment brand knowledge. This is perhaps not surprising given the importance of word-of-mouth channels to build employment brand knowledge.

Recruiters, viewed as the internal workforce representatives, indicated an inflated view of employment attributes compared to external workers. From a pure marketing strategy, the misalignment between internal and external workers can have negative consequences. In the same way inflating product quality may have negative impacts on customer satisfaction and reduce chances for repeat and returning buyers, positively exaggerating employment attributes to external workers can result in perceived lower company reputation. If hired, a worker may experience disappointment, negative attitudes, lower commitment, and decide to leave the organization. Thus, it seems necessary to consider the source and intentions with leveraging internal workers to transmit employment brand knowledge. For example, a recruiter would seem to have different reasons for sharing information about employment attributes for example to assure a job acceptance from a talented applicant. An internal worker offering information about the company to an outside friend has different intentions for sharing insights about the employers and may give the “real picture.” Based on the different sources and intentions of the sender, the credibility and trust in the content of the employment brand knowledge might be affected and generate different worker response. Thus

**Proposition 13.** The credibility and trust in the employment brand knowledge is impacted by the source of the sender.

In order to further bridge the employment brand knowledge gap between current and external workers, some organizations leverage their current employees by acting as brand ambassadors to “live the brand” and communicate employment brand knowledge to external stakeholders who in turn might become workers themselves (Girod, 2005; de Chernatony et al., 2006). Front line workers may interact with potential recruits as they respond to their customer needs which organizations try to leverage (Birnbaum & Zeplin, 2005). A case in point is LL Bean that markets their employment attributes through their current employees that, by living the brand, may attract more customers and potential workers. Many of their current workers were customers that applied and were hired for open sales positions. One benefit they offer to their employees, is the option to buy returned but fully functional sporting goods such as kayaks and tents at a significantly reduce price. Accordingly, the LL Beans workers live the brand through their products and transmit employment attributes in a holistic fashion to external stakeholders. Returning to the directly and indirectly related employment attributes distinction, Ferris et al. (2002) argued that organizational attributes are more important factors to build employment brand knowledge and subsequent positive worker response. It would seem, both from a practical angle as observed at LL Beans, and from a theoretical one offered by Ferris and his colleagues, that transmitting organizational indirectly related employment attributes would reduce the knowledge gap and build employment brand knowledge among external workers. Hence

**Proposition 14.** Workers living the brand through its product and services will transmit indirectly related employment attributes.

**Building Diversity Employment Brand Knowledge**

Both marketing practitioners and scholars have realized the importance of tailoring to a diverse customer base in order to reflect the US demographics as can be noted in diversity representation in various commercial, news anchors, movie casts, and sitcoms. Research in the broader diversity domain suggests that workplace diversity may provide different perspectives and insights necessary to solve complex problems and can add a competitive edge for teams and organizations (Erhardt, 2011; Erhardt, Werbel, & Shrader, 2003; Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003; Joshi & Roh, 2009). The
more favorable attraction to organizations offering affirmative action programs than diversity management programs. They speculated that management driven diversity initiatives could inadvertently lead to rising resentment; attending diversity workshops may create uncomfortable situations for women and minorities.

In short, research on diversity issues related with employment branding research suggests that women and minorities respond differently to images of employment brand diversity representation and that specific workplace actions with respect to diversity initiatives may have differential impacts on worker response. However, more research is clearly needed in this area. Perkins et al. (2000) noted that minorities did not show more interest in directly related employment attributes compared with nonminorities. Yet, this might change if we consider directly related employment attributes such as the composition of the team. Beyond the “pictorial” diversity factor, sharing specific demographic data of teams in which the applicant might work may drive positive worker attitudes and subsequent positive worker response; the demographics of coworkers could play a deciding factor in whether a worker accepts a job offer. For indirectly related employment attributes such as the diversity composition of executive boards (Erhardt et al., 2003), mentorship geared toward women and minorities (Ibarra, 1993), and overall familiarity of the employment brand with respect to discriminatory lawsuits (Robinson & Dechant, 1997) may impact worker response as well. We believe this line of research is promising as the workplace continues to diversify and organizations are attempting to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

Proposition 16. Both directly and indirectly related diversity employment attributes impacts organizations’ ability to recruit and attract a diverse talent pool.

ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTION

Much of the I/O psychology influenced employment brand research is grounded on a foundation of organizational attraction as opposed to the consumer psychology framework of employment brand knowledge (brand attitudes and brand familiarity) used to structure this review. To complete the review of the existing EB literature, we provide a brief overview of this construct and its use in the EB-related research stream.
Organizational attractiveness research addresses the questions of why individuals are attracted to organizations and which factors and elements of the construct affect the quantity and quality of organizations' applicant pools (Barber, 1998). Attraction is defined as the generation of applicants by means of getting potential candidates to view the organization as a desirable place to work (Rynes, 1991). Underlying the concept of attraction is the idea that the greater the number of qualified applicants an organization attracts, the larger the pool of applicants from which to choose will be, resulting in greater utility for the organization's selection system (Boudreau & Rynes, 1985; Cable & Turban, 2001).

Assuming the job choice process begins with the individual decision to pursue advertised employment with an organization, extensive efforts have been devoted in understanding which factors influence individuals' pursuit decisions (Barber, 1998; Gatewood et al., 1993). The single most important factor is the degree of person-organization fit in terms of the compatibility between the applicants' values and needs and those of the organization (Kristof, 1996). For example, Cable and Judge (1996) found that person-organization fit perceptions (i.e., congruence between applicants' values and their perceptions of the recruiting organizations' values) were important in job-choice decisions, even after controlling for the attractiveness of job attributes.

Scholars have found that organization image, subsequent information search, and organization familiarity are also related to pursuit intentions. Application decisions are thought to be influenced by potential applicants' impressions of an organization's attractiveness as an employer identified as the applicant's perception of the organization's image (Cable & Graham, 2000; Gatewood et al., 1993; Lievens & Hightouse, 2003), and its overall familiarity (or brand awareness), which determine subsequent applicants' information search and intention to pursue employment (Barber, 1998; Cable & Turban, 2001; Highhouse, Zickar, Thorsteinson, Stierwalt, & Slaughter, 1999; Rynes, 1991). Factors such as job characteristics, position scarcity, salary & benefits, location, industry, human resource systems, social consciousness, and value statements have been found to influence organizational attractiveness (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Breaugh, 2008; Bretz & Judge, 1994; Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001; Hightouse et al., 2002). Although previous research often looked at each of these elements individually, most recruitment studies have begun increasingly to examine the effects of multiple information sources on organizational attractiveness (Collins & Han, 2004; Ployhart, 2006; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2005).

Recent literature on attraction has also focused on the functional benefits or value derived from the components of the employment offering. Instrumental attributes tend to represent objective job and organizational attributes (e.g., pay and location), whereas symbolic attributes such as organizational personality or reputation represent the subjective meanings and inferences that people ascribe to the job and the organization. Less research has been devoted to examining the experiential and symbolic benefits of the employment offering, which are related to the "feelings" associated with the employment experience. Some authors have analyzed attraction from the marketing perspective to introduce symbolic aspects such as the instrumental-symbolic framework (Lievens & Hightouse, 2003), organizational personality (Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, & Mohr, 2004) or the organization's reputation as a source of pride in being a member (Cable & Turban, 2003). These studies found that symbolic attributes provided an incremental explanation of organizational attractiveness beyond that provided by instrumental attributes.

Depending on the measure used, the organizational attraction construct typically includes a number of components ranging from affective attitude toward an organization, viewing it as a desirable entity, exerting effort to work for it, wanting to interview with the organization, choosing to interview with the organization, choosing to interview; job pursuit intentions, intentions of accepting a job offer, and accepting a job offer (Aiman-Smith, Bauer, & Cable, 2001; Barber, 1998). Studies use organizational attraction as a dependent variable (i.e., applicant attraction outcomes) in research on job-pursuit intentions, job/organization attraction, and acceptance intentions or job choice; and as an independent variable when studying job and organizational attributes, recruiter characteristics, perceptions of recruitment process, perceived fit, perceived alternatives, and hiring expectations (Chapman et al., 2005).

As can be seen, organizational attraction measures typically combine attitudinal (i.e., affect toward an organization) and intentional (i.e., job-pursuit intentions), and behavioral (job acceptance) measures. Proponents of this construct contend that attitudes precede behaviors in line with Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. Although this may optimize the predictive power of the construct it makes it less useful in a more formal employment brand framework that distinguishes between brand associations, brand attitudes & familiarity, and behavioral responses to employment brand knowledge.

In the WBEBE model, organizational attraction appears as an indirect attribute of the employment offering (see Fig. 1). Organization attraction is
an attitude toward a large variety of organizational information associated with the corporation offering the employment. Ultimately, this attitude is combined with several other information sources about the job (direct and indirect attributes) that ultimately lead to employment brand attitude.

**Future Research**

Given the relevance of the organizational attraction construct in the literature, we offer several potential avenues for future research efforts. In general, we advocate the need to reconceptualize the construct of attraction in the light of the WBEBE model, which would have significant implications for the development of research into employment branding. Specifically, a shift is needed toward a definition of attraction in line with the marketing perspective on how brands work, which would move the prevailing paradigm away from understanding job attraction as a combination of attitudes, intentions, and behaviors and focus exclusively on the affective feelings of attraction to the organization.

Two other more specific areas of research deserve further attention: temporal dimension and the target of research. First, as Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005, p. 913) contend research on attraction typically considers attraction to an organization at a single point of time based on a “snapshot” of information available about the organization. However, according to our WBEBE model, there is a temporal element in individuals’ branding knowledge. Rather than basing themselves solely on recruitment sources, individuals gather, interpret, and evaluate information about organizations over a period of time. Although Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) noted the need for research regarding the influence of time on applicant attraction, little research exists on this issue. To shed further light on the importance of these factors, there is a need for longitudinal attraction research to assess the elements of the WBEBE model herein proposed.

Finally, another area of future research concerns the target of research in traditional attraction research. With few exceptions (e.g., the work of Highhouse et al., 1999), existing studies have focused almost exclusively on early recruitment stages, targeting potential applicants who are either currently searching for a job or planning to participate in the recruitment process soon (Barber, 1998). Oftentimes, these studies rely on samples of undergraduates or graduate students, which seem a limitation in the broader EB research domain. Building from the employment brand model, job seekers are one important group of individuals among others with employment brand knowledge. However, current employees of a focal organization and other individuals not affiliated with the focal organization, including fully engaged workers, unemployed individuals or future employees, also possess employment brand knowledge. Accordingly, we propose to extend research attention beyond academic settings in an attempt to generalize findings to larger, more diverse samples. In that sense, we consider the attraction literature would benefit from drawing their samples from a population broader than that of students or potential applicants in the early stages of recruitment.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter has presented a framework for reinterpreting the recruiting, organizational attraction, and job choice literature within the domain of marketing, specifically consumer psychology. We have attempted to accomplish three goals. First, we have provided the established and budding employment brand researcher an overview of the product/service branding literature. Using theoretical frameworks from the marketing literature, we have provided a means for translating the employment offering into a good that can be branded and managed in the minds of potential workers. This is a dramatic shift from the perspective of developing the “employer brand,” that is, developing associations with the corporate brand developing its identity as an employer. Second, we have provided a comprehensive review with an associated bibliography of nearly all the employment branding work that has been published over the past 15 years. Researchers considering making a contribution to this stream will be well serviced with this inventory and summary of previous work. Finally, we provided 16 propositions that identify important gaps in the employment brand literature.

A major focus of this chapter has been untangling constructs to clear the way for more theory-based research. We would discourage the use of measures of organizational attraction that include affect, intentions, and behaviors. As Fig. 1 makes clear, facts and feelings about brands that identify employment offerings are summarized by the holistic brand attitude. Attraction to the organization is but one of many associations that combine to form this brand attitude. Combined with brand familiarity, brand attitude then affects the attention workers pay to the brand, their intentions toward the brand, and ultimately their behavior. Organization attraction combines all of these processes into one construct and does not provide managers with a useful framework for influencing worker
behaviors. Simply using affective organizational attraction as a primary independent variable is not much different than examining the impact of workers’ perceptions of coworker relations on job choice. Future researchers need to focus on understanding how the constellation of brand associations lead to employment brand attitude and how brand attitude leads to attention, intentions, and behavior.

Lastly, we would emphasize that there is a great opportunity for future research in the employment brand space. Although these are mapped out in our propositions, we would point out that a typology of brand associations is undeveloped. Very little work has been done on employment brand familiarity. Although there is a growing literature on how organizations influence job choice, grounding future work in the employment brand knowledge model broadens the scope of possible research and provides a roadmap for strong theoretical contribution.

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