

## **HR Marketing - Employer Brand** Capturing, retaining and captivating talent

## **Marketing RH - Marque Employeur** Accaparer, fidéliser et captiver les talents

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## Abstract

Today, companies are facing a wide range of changes, whether economic, technological, environmental or sociological. As a result, they are about to enter a period of radical transition, which will result in a serious decline in the labour force and, by the same token, in the available workforce (Légaré, 2004).

This will have a radical impact on the labour market. Not only will the workforce be scarcer, older and more diversified, but it will also be more demanding and more difficult to retain (Fabi et al., 2009). In recent years, many employers in the private and parapublic sectors have begun to reflect on the strategies to be implemented in order to mobilize and retain their human resources (HR). In this article, we mobilize the literature on HR practices, from human resources retention to the concept of employer branding, while taking into account the constantly changing socio-economic context. The objective is thus to arrive at a conceptual model of employer branding practices.

**Keywords:** Human resources retention; Employer brand; Demanding workforce; Economic climate; HR marketing.

## Résumé

A l'heure actuelle, les entreprises font face à une panoplie de mutations, que ce soit sur le plan économique, technologique, environnemental ou sociologique. De ce fait, celles-ci sont sur le point d'entrer dans une période de transition radicale, qui se traduira au cours des imminentes années par une sérieuse décrépitude de la population active et, par le fait même, de la main-d'œuvre disponible (Légaré, 2004).

Ceci aura un impact radical sur marché du travail. En effet, non seulement la main-d'œuvre y sera plus rare, plus âgée et plus diversifiée, mais elle sera aussi plus exigeante et plus difficile à fidéliser (Fabi et al., 2009). Aussi, plusieurs employeurs des secteurs privés et parapublics ont entrepris au cours des dernières années une réflexion sur les stratégies à mettre en œuvre en vue de mobiliser et de fidéliser leurs ressources humaines (RH). Dans le cadre du présent article, nous mobilisons la littérature concernant les pratiques RH, allant de la fidélisation des ressources humaines jusqu'au concept de la marque employeur, tout en tenant compte du contexte socioéconomique qui est en évolution permanente. L'objectif est ainsi d'aboutir à un modèle conceptuel des pratiques de la marque employeur.

**Mots clés :** Fidélisation des ressources humaines ; Marque employeur ; Main d'œuvre exigeante ; Climat économique ; Marketing RH.

## **Introduction**

With the advent of globalization, unemployment is increasing Tadjousti & Idlhadj (2019). In other words, the company is not only unable to ensure or guarantee a regular bonus, but above all unable to create or maintain jobs. This results in a lack of loyalty, commitment, involvement and a sense of belonging. The demands and the obstacles are more and more distinct and perceivable (Kotler, 2007), certainly the plans of fusion, delocalization and offshoring have annihilated the boundaries (Drucker, 1970).

Yesterday's individual is not today's individual. This is a reality that is manifested by the presence of Generation Y (1980-1995), which is endowed with a strong character (Strauss & Howe, 1991). These facts are part of an economic context marked by technological changes. This generates tensions between employers and employees (Mc Gregor, 1960).

As a result, the HR function remains on its knees in front of a panoply of wishes that diverge according to the hierarchical levels present in the company. The HR function is thus required to accompany the changes in the company's context of intervention, to manage talent in an optimal way or to find the right balance between concepts that seem unlikely, such as quietude, achievement, permanence, antagonism, professional bloom and then harmony between private and professional life (Panczuck & Point, 2008).

With the objective of seducing, capturing and retaining talented and resourceful candidates (Chaminade, 2008), studies on the concept of HR Marketing were initiated from the end of the 1990s to highlight and propose various HR practices that allow to keep and retain talents. In this approach, some authors such as McDonald and Dunbar (2004) and Panczuck & Point (2008) talk about HR segmentation. They consider that employees are internal customers. Liger (2004) points out that in order to consider candidates as customers, organizations develop employee-company alliances by giving certain employees a mercantile appearance as a means of communicating the loyalty and nobility of the organization towards its employees. They thus become ambassadors of the employer brand (Liger, 2004).

No one is unaware that the employer brand is the cliché of the firm that it is favorable to produce, to tame its shortcomings (Capelli, 1999) while collaborating with internal stakeholders (owners, shareholders and employees) and external stakeholders (State, government, research institutions, companies, etc.). Certainly, internal and external employer branding makes it possible to establish a sincere and spontaneous link with candidates and employees in order to become reference providers (Ashby & Pell, 2001). The objective is to

get them to achieve their goals, while remaining committed to the values and purpose of their companies.

As mentioned above, with the development of technology and globalization, we are now encountering human resources that are savvy, manic and, above all, aware of their role and place in the company, which pushes talents to become more demanding when choosing the company they want to join. This is the purpose of this article, which aims to answer the following question:

**In what context and through what practices can companies capture, retain and captivate talent?**

Thus, we have broken down our research question into three hypotheses:

- **H1**: The employer must maintain a good relationship with its employees
- **H2**: The employer brand is the result of a permanent interaction and dependence between the internal and external employer brand
- **H3**: Employer branding is necessary because the stakes are by no means negligible

In order to answer our problem and verify the research hypotheses, we gather and analyze a varied literature review in order to confirm the role of the integration of the concept of human resources marketing in the management of the latter as a main competitive advantage.

Our analysis will be subdivided into three sections: the first one dedicated to the consonance of social relations within the company, focusing on the management of tensions and conflicts of interest as well as the analysis of the transition from personnel to human capital. The second will be dedicated to the alignment of the internal and external employer brand with the managerial practices of the leaders, pointing out the relational aspect of work in addition to personal development and the authentic transmission of knowledge. And a final paragraph to shed light on the challenges of the HR function between yesterday and today.

### 1. Ensuring Consonance of Social Relations within the Company

Dave Ulrich's (1996) model emphasizes the responsibility of the HR function, equipping the HR manager with a set of functions that range from being a business facilitator to being a knowledgeable, administrative person. The model presented below (see Figure 1) states that the HR manager is expected to take ownership of four functions, assuming and mastering the role of strategic partner, the faculty of change agent, the legal-administrative performance and finally the role of employee champion (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2010).

**Figure 1: Strategy - Preparing for the Future**



**Source:** Ulrich, Brockbank (2010)

According to Stankiewicz (2010), the Strategic Partner is called upon to give a hand to the general management through the implementation of a policy of support during recruitment and the development of internal competencies to achieve customer welfare. On the other hand, the change agent is required to ensure the appropriate standardization, although the organizational mode of the entity varies. This makes it imperative to follow the evolving cultural trends. As far as the Administrative Expert is concerned, his purpose is to deliver a judicial, administrative and qualitative supply, in order to allow the Employee Champion to establish a firm level of commitment in order to reinforce and consolidate the interest of the employees towards the organizational goals, and this is how the role of the HR Director has

progressed from a human resources manager to a communication pillar called Brand Builder (Haegel-Cohen, 2010).

### **1.1. The shift from the notion of personnel to the notion of human capital**

The role of human resources has evolved considerably, and this is why the challenges of the HR function have been developed to bring out a truly operational dimension.

In 1914, Henri Fayol claimed that the HR function did not exist, indicating later that any firm could be defined through six functions: production, sales, finance, security, accounting and of course administration. The gradual existence of trade unions between 1914 and 1936 heralded the emergence of the notion of "personnel". Although the Taylorian model was based on simplicity and the division of repetitive tasks through a scientific organization of work (Taylor, 1911), it was criticized for its lack of consideration of human capital. He invalidated the role of the HR function by reducing it to the recruitment of the workforce and the management of its payroll.

From 1936 to the Second World War, it became useful for the leaders and renters to have a spokesperson, in order to manage and handle social relations and conflicts of interest with the payroll. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the assimilation of the whole body of employees to the labor code and, on the other hand, by the will of the strike agitators to reduce working time, while pushing up wages (Peretti, 1994).

The era of the thirty glorious years (1945-1979) was marked by a grandiose economic growth of firms (Fourastié, 1979). The major problem was that of hiring the wage bill to achieve a quantifiable level of productivity. As a result, the innovation of social laws and the contribution of organizational sociology (Livian, 2012) pushed managers to conceive and admit that any attention attributed to their employees implies a record and a certain motivation. This causality has led to a correlation and dependency effect (Mayo, 1945), resulting in a mutation of the personal function to substitute and become a seasoned managerial function to follow the trend of human development; such is the case for coaching and training.

At the end of the 1990s, a period marked by globalization, the HR function plays the role of business partner (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2010). The objective is to guarantee a level of sharing and mutual recovery between managers and interventionist leaders. To be the leader of HR, the people function must apply itself more to create notable value for both the company's

customers and its employees. Therefore, the efficiency of the implementation of a strategic partner lies in its ability to push the firm away from the classical model in charge of the administrative and operational content, and towards the strategist and the generalissimo predominant in terms of human impact.

Although Ulrich's model (1996) emphasized the impact of human resources on stakeholders, it has been undeniably detracted from, because of the neglect of the 'Sales' dimension. Thus, the HR function, begins to be part of a strategic dynamic, granting the HR manager the opportunity to put his human skills at the service of sales and influence (Nieto Rodríguez, 2012), such is the pure and perfect evocation of HR marketing.

### **1.2.Managing tensions and conflicts of interest**

Ruch (2002), has shown that the economic slump has prompted firms to expand their human resources intervention fields, to cover the HR management issues that emanate mainly from the economic context and atmosphere. This atmosphere has been able to accentuate and hasten the process of change in the HR function, leading the escort of all constitutional alterations at the national and global level. Therefore, the management of companies becomes an obligation of law in order to avoid all kinds of possible repercussions and this through the exploitation and highlighting of strategic plans namely (Haegel-Cohen, 2010): the conduct of mutations in the new trends and strategic practices to powerfully impact the issues of firms that have been addressed in different ways.

Unlike the classical theories criticized by the unique mobilization of pecuniary stimuli to motivate employees (Fayol, 1914; Taylor, 1911), the HR function has been able to establish a desire for permanent dialogue with employees, given that the interest shown in its employees can impact their human (Peretti, 1994), professional and emotional interests. This explains the birth of a managerial HR function dedicated to the administrative and social management of personnel, to retention and to the development of operational strategies. This is how the HR function has gained a certain faculty and margin in various fields, allowing it to hold an evolving technical knowledge and a constant power to become an employer of reference.

Hunt & Landry (2005), claim that the handling of Geniuses is conditioned by the employee's belief in his company, a true adherence will push him to highly recommend it. This is why the match between external communication and internal behavior must increase in order not to lead to false promises (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2014).

Obviously, the mentality and vision of freshly graduated potentials has been reformed, as it was conceivable for generation X to build their career in the same firm. Nowadays, it is not feasible for a new potential graduate belonging to generation Y to project himself in the same company for a linear or perpetual period. This has led to the birth of salary mistrust and the employer's desire to advise and offer exemplary career paths, tailored to the individual and not to the position to be filled (Charbonnier-Voirin & Vignolles, 2007).

Ignoring the possibilities of one's professional career as well as the lack of knowledge of one's mission and contribution to the company's performance, can only lead to layoffs and professional zapping (Stankiewicz, 2010). Currently, the strengthening of the social link between HR management and employees is becoming a requirement. The objective is to develop a coherent culture with the adapted standardization, in a perspective of softening, strengthening the sense of entrepreneurial belonging and delighting the social relations, without forgetting to integrate the HR function in the business support (Loufrani-Fedida & Saint-Germes, 2013).

The revision of the origin of the HR function has led to detect and value the driving parts that govern firms through the technicality of the approaches and technical requests, this has led to the personalization and professionalism of the HR management. Thus, by being part of a product logic based on the adapted standardization of the customer offer, this HR function was able to impose itself as a bold, applied and able to give a strong hand to the company's business through the interest in the customer's benefit (Poujol et al., 2014).

Stankiewicz (2010) has shown that the contribution of the HR function lies in its ability to provide the company with the flexibility and regularity required to strongly impact the sense of negotiation, and to accommodate the management of complexity in the hope of procuring technical expertise, although the opening of borders has led to fierce competition.

The effect of globalization has not been able to take away the HR function's willingness to approach the business as a strategic partner, able to combine managerial sense, customer value and the achievement of commercial success.



## **2. Aligning the internal and external Employer Brand: a managerial practice of the leaders**

### **2.1. The interest and relational aspect of work**

Ambler and Barrow (1996), were able to prove that the employer brand project has become a primitive practice, for which it is mandatory to ensure the aggregation and cohesion between the message transmitted and the candidate's lived experience. To do this, the company must succeed in making its ambassadors live the employer brand experience before the external communication to future potentials and candidates is done (Kapoor, 2010). However, employer branding has intensified to become an asset emancipated from employer governance so that the covenant and charter passed between the firm and its employees is respected (Chhabra & Mishra, 2008). It is therefore useful and absolute to be conditioned by the stakes between the internal and external employer brand through the interest in the work and the relational aspect that results from it.

Achieving cohesion and harmony means being able to align all communications, whether internal or external. To achieve this, the company must avoid making promises externally that will not be fulfilled internally. In this way, the company will be able to achieve credibility, and hold a dominant employer brand in the positive sense, both internally and externally (Charbonnier-Voirin, 2014).

Giving therefore part to the function of emotion, talking about its history, enhancing its culture and giving meaning to communication, will attract new potentials and make its entity a salary pride. Nevertheless, the company has to avoid falling into the ambush of digitalization, in a decade invaded by the digital effect. In this way, it turns out that bringing to digital human influence, emotion in the messages can only ensure the success of managerial practices (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2014).

All firms will have to work on their accessibility, more precisely in their speeches and dialogues but also in the way of acting and being with future potentials and candidates, because in no case, the firm is supposed to refuse to get in touch with its employees, although the presence on the web makes the employer brand an accessible function in a world where the digital make's faith (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2014).

## **2.2. Personal development and authentic transmission of Knowledge:**

Personal development is only the fruit of a loyal and authentic transmission of knowledge, so it is fruitful to become the first and best employer reference, so as to honor the following issues: using authentic communication by eliminating the practice of copying and pasting from colleagues, so the employer brand of the firm can be differentiated from that of competitors, via the company's own identity and cultural values experienced during the career (Berthon, 2005).

Aaker (1997) has shown that the improvement of the internal image of the company depends largely on the works and acts of loyalty and motivation of the employees, through various practices, for example: by associating them with the development of the firm, by allowing them to act on various projects, etc. Some companies also take care of the balance that their employees have to find between private and professional life, we quote the example of the employer's crèches, even spaces of blooming and evacuation of the stress.

Thus, the development of its internal image remains conditioned by the commitment of employees to communicate effectively about their employers. Thus, employees will be able to highly recommend the company where they work as soon as they have mastered the missions for which they are hired (Chernatony et al., 2003).

## **3. The challenges of the Human Resources function between yesterday and today**

### **3.1. Theories relating to human resources**

The Taylorian theory (1856-1915), was developed to conceive and model a new organization of work, based on a rational division for a primary, simplistic and recurrent activity.

This arrangement can only be communicated and entrusted to a specialized workforce, paid per hour of work, the purpose being that of achieving an adequate formula for the best way to produce "The One Best Way", without the attainment of a meaningful fatigue approach, so this approach and scientific organization of work (OST) was able to detect the best possible way to monopolize and monopolize the mass production needs.

In turn, Ford (1926) opted for a work in line, while putting an organizational model of work based on the standardization of products and car parts. This strategic choice, was escorted by an increase in salaries and therefore an increase in purchasing power in the absolute hope of employer loyalty. (Les transformations des conventions salariales entre théorie et histoire: d'Henry Ford au fordisme (Orléan & Boyer 1991).

Named as the first Father Edificator and founder of the sociology of work, Mayo (1945), was able to conclude and infer through his experiments that the extent and effectiveness of the psychological climate took precedence over any possible variable, namely commercial and behavioral performance. This Australian psychologist tested the influence and impact of the addition of any possible advantage on the sense of belonging and involvement of employees. Indeed, after his experience at the HAWTHORNE factory (29,000 employees), a factory in which the Taylorian model produced discouragement, despair and perpetual isolation, the "HAWTHORNE" experience had as its objective to provide a firm and justified answer to the faculty and possibility of responding to the aspirations and desires of employees while having an exhaustive productivity. To this end, a demonstration was made to verify the truth of the matter by improving the level of lighting for a group X without changing the lighting for the control group Y.

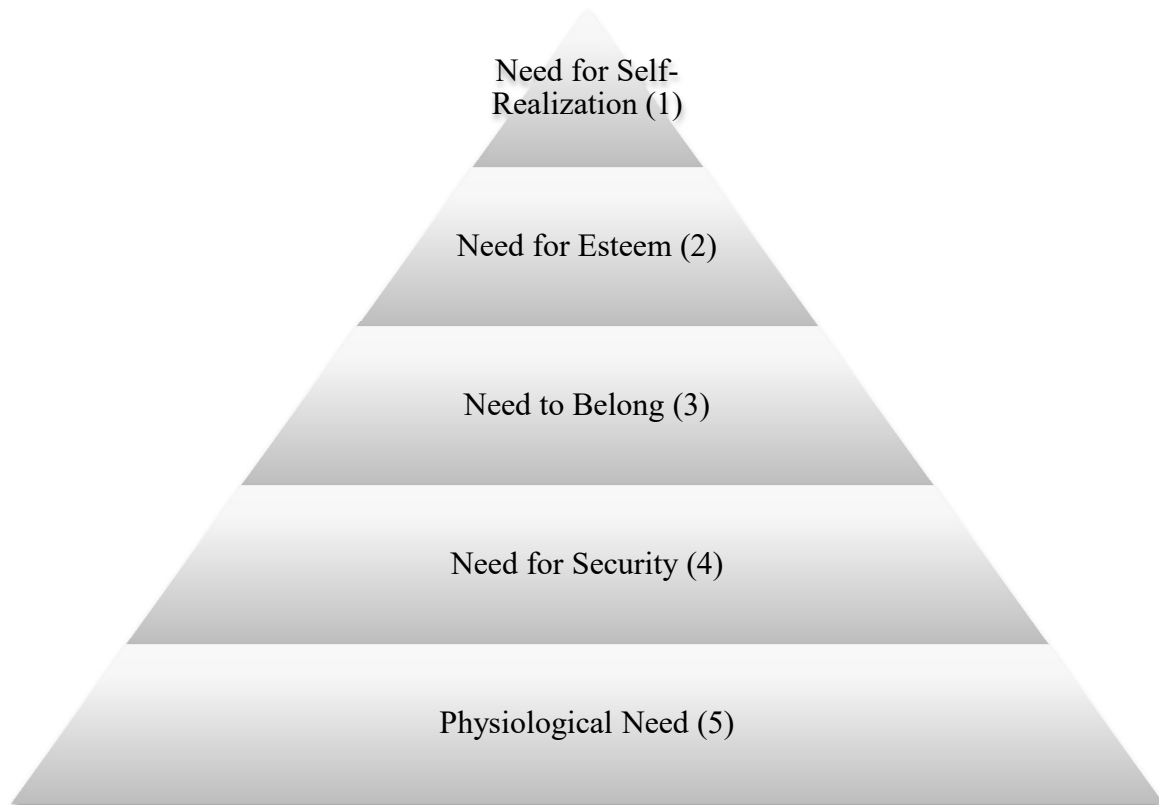
Elton Mayo's results were significant, for the simple reason that interest in human nature had a strong impact on business productivity. As a result, the Australian researcher's experimental method was able to challenge the Taylorian protocol, to show that belonging to a group, being valued and chosen, can only stimulate a better sense of belonging and a desire to excel in one's career (Mousli, 2007).

For his part, the American psychologist Herzberg (1959), was known for his desire to enrich the tasks at work through the Bi-factor model. Maslow's theory of need, the theory of motivation and the Bi-factor model are based on two modalities of satisfaction, namely:

- Hygiene factors that can be linked to the work atmosphere, such as job security, the relationship with the hierarchy, remuneration, concordance with the teams; the absence of this arsenal can lead to salary frustration.
- The motivating factors remain specific to the content of the work, namely professional and personal development, the weighing of responsibility and the valuation of the position to be filled.

For his part, Maslow has suggested a hierarchical hypothesis conditioned by the achievement of various existing needs.

**Figure 2: Maslow's pyramid**



**Source: Maslow (1954)**

(1): Work gives meaning to the employee's daily life. The employee feels fulfilled by work and is able to interact in society.

(2): The completed work brings an affirmation from the employer, a recognition from the customers and the employees. Indeed, after a beneficial result for the beneficiaries, the latter feel indebted, congratulate the employee and reward him.

(3): The social environment must be favorable to work. Thus, the employee will develop a sense of belonging to a referential community.

(4): A decent salary, as well as well-defined working hours, must allow the employee to maintain a regular, predictable life where anxiety about tomorrow does not exist.

(5): A job that meets ordinary and primary needs with a salary that allows for food consumption and decent housing.

Thus, a correct holding and a procedural satisfaction of all the needs, will allow to reach the top of the pyramid for the achievement of a motivation proper to the person concerned, and to the defined theory which differs from one person to another.

### **3.2. The evolution of human resources issues**

In order to capture and retain their employees, firms are led to predict the wishes of employees and potential future, as their expectations and inspirations have been renewed to transit from a generation X to a generation Y, which is why nomadism was born.

Capelli (1999) has already specified that the attachment to the employer is outdated for a certain abrogation of the lifetime employment, this manifestation was only an apparent part of a huge Iceberg, the effects of which were evident in the 1990s.

According to Strauss & Howe (1991), the advent of generation Y on the labour market has only confirmed and ratified the major issue of employer attractiveness and loyalty for multiple reasons:

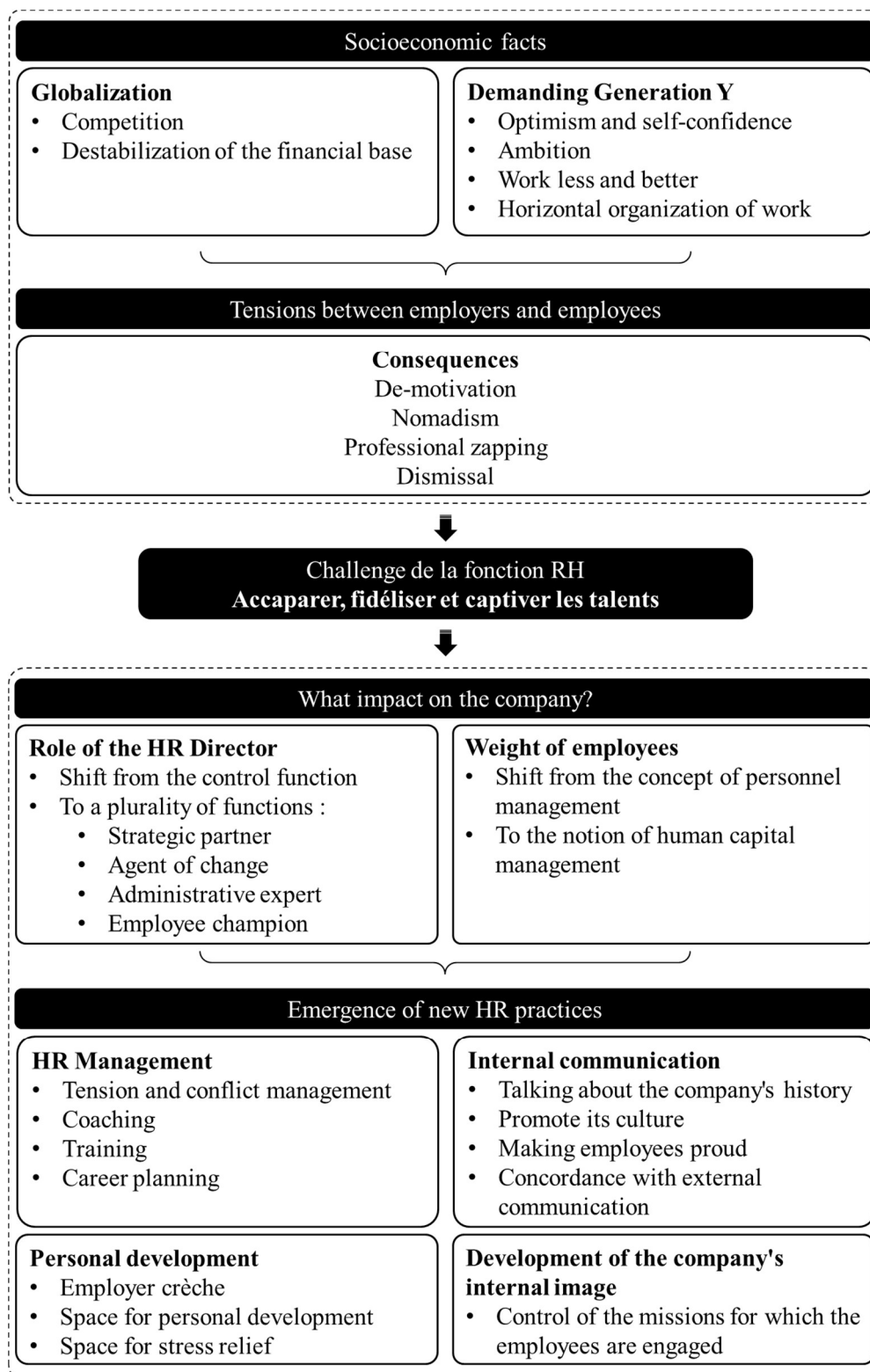
- Generation Y's optimism and self-confidence;
- The demand for personal development;
- The desire to work less and better;
- The horizontal hierarchy of the work organization.

It is therefore important to point out that the interest in compensation, internal communication, as well as the company's know-how in terms of attractiveness and retention of talent can only allow for a rapid achievement of an organizational attitude that meets employer standards.

### **4. Result: Conceptual model of employer branding practices**

Thanks to the mobilization of the literature review in the previous points, we propose a conceptual model of employer branding practices (see figure below).

**Figure 3: Conceptual model of employer branding practices**



**Source : Authors from Kotler (2007), Drucker (1970), Strauss & Howe (1991), Mc Gregor (1960) ; Taylor (1911), Peretti (1994), Ulrich (2006), Ulrich & Brockbank (2010), Aaker (1997), Chernatony et al. (2003).**

In the conceptual model that we propose, we highlight the socio-economic facts that firms face. Indeed, as Kotler (2007) shows, unemployment is increasing because of globalization, which has generated increased competition between firms, whether on a national or international scale. This competition is so fierce that companies are seeing their financial base reduced. This prevents them from recruiting, launching coherent training plans or maintaining the bonus system.

It would be a mistake not to mention the impact of the lack of staff and the need for continuous adaptation on employees. Indeed, they face a reduced time allocated to the realization of their missions, the unexpected reorganization of their work (Brown & Harvey, 2006), or the obligation to be polyvalent continuously (Algava & Vinck, 2015; El Mallouli & Sassi, 2019).

At the same time, if Generation X turned a blind eye to certain practices that seem unfair, Generation Y has a strength of character through which it declares itself demanding. Indeed, as Strauss & Howe (1991) show, generation Y are confident; they are part of a personal development cycle through work; they are careful to balance their professional and personal lives and they appreciate a vertical organization of work.

This clash of mentalities gives rise to tensions and conflicts of interest between employers and employees, which can lead to employee demotivation, career zapping or dismissal (Stankiewicz, 2010). As a result, Liger (2004) points out that the HR function is faced with a challenge according to which the company must capture, retain and captivate talent. This cannot be without impact on the company. Indeed, HR managers have gone from being simple personnel managers, which translates into a purely administrative and control function, to Brandbuilders through the management and development of human capital.

Indeed, all of these elements mentioned above lead the company to maintain and adopt new HR practices on different levels. In terms of HR management, this translates into the management of tensions and conflicts of interest between the different hierarchical levels, but also into coaching, training and career plan management. In terms of internal communication, the company must communicate its history, its culture and its employees as a source of pride. The objective is to make employees adhere to the missions and objectives pursued by the company. Therefore, the employer must ensure that internal and external communication are in harmony. In terms of personal development, the company is committed to setting up, for example, employer day-care centers or even spaces for personal development and stress relief.



In terms of developing the employer's internal image, the employer must ensure that employees master the tasks for which they have been hired.

## Conclusion

In this article, we have mobilized human resource theory and HR marketing practices. We have thus developed a conceptual model of employer branding practices (see Figure 3).

Faced with the current challenges facing companies, they are obliged to put in place a set of HR practices to give meaning to their work and to lead human capital into a process of continuous improvement, through which they will succeed in mastering the mission to which they are committed. This will enable human capital to better understand the requirements of the context in which they operate by strengthening their ability to adapt to change. Nowadays, adaptability ensures, in part, the sustainability and performance of companies (Nia & Omari, 2019).

Saint-Onge and Haines (2007), define organizational performance as the ability to create value for the organization's stakeholders (i.e. investors, employees, consumers, citizens). They propose four dimensions to measure this performance: sustainability, economic efficiency, legitimacy with external groups and human resource value (employee mobility, work climate, employee performance, employee development).

Thus, performance is a polysemous notion, which is not only technical or financial, but also and above all social (Nia & Omari, 2019). All functions of the company contribute to it. Today, the focus is increasingly on the contribution of HR to organizational performance. HR management has seen the emergence of a range of tools and practices, which aim to enable management to respond to the challenges of the context that constitutes its field of interaction. To optimize its results, an organization must also put in place tools and practices that enable good interaction between the internal and external parts of the organization.

Human resources would therefore play a vital role in the life and performance of any modern organization, as they would be one of the key factors in its ability to respond adequately to the demands of this unstable context. It is therefore not in the interest of organizations to neglect the importance of the role of the Human Resources function, as it enables them to implement projects to develop their human potential.

An organization that wants to captivate and keep the human potential that will allow it to distinguish itself and be competitive (El Mallouli & Sassi, 2019), must keep its word by applying the promises communicated externally, without forgetting to motivate the



ambassadors internally. This leads us to reflect on the social audit or more precisely the Human Resources audit HILMI, y., & NAJI, F. (2016).

The audit of Human Resources allows Maghrebian companies to manage their activities by introducing into HRM concepts of figures and indicators. Certainly, these allow the management of the interactions of the HR function with all the stakeholders, who are increasingly demanding on the performance of the company; but the HR function lacks them. Our research work carried out within the framework of this article was confronted with a limit which is reflected in the lack of studies carried out on the audit of human resources in Moroccan companies. For this, we formulate the perspectives of this work, which are in line with the reflection conducted by Toufah (2019), in the form of questions: what is the contribution of the Human Resources audit to organizational performance? And what is the state of play, through the HR audit, on the HR practice in Moroccan companies?

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