

INTERNAL MARKETING: A LIFE GAURD IN RECESSIONARY TIMES

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Recession was a buzzword sometime back. From students to CEOs everybody has tried to measure this term “recession” from their own perspective. What is recession, what are its consequences, from where it started, where it will go, how it has affected people, lives, businesses and specially the marketing.

This article has focused over recession and the best practices done by business giants perse. Companies changed their outlook, changed its strategies, changed its communication to maintain and retain their existing customers. Strategist were so frightened that they shifted their focus from customer acquisition to customer retention. Obviously, to cut down the cost is the priority when the whole economy is going through the bad phase of recession. But question lies can we still think about spending in branding or should we focus on passing assurance messages to our existing customer?

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What is Internal marketing:

Internal marketing is an ongoing process that occurs strictly within a company or organization whereby the functional process aligns, motivates and empowers employees at all management levels to consistently deliver a satisfying customer experience. According to Burkitt and Zealley, "the challenge for internal marketing is not only to get the right messages across, but to embed them in such a way that they both change and reinforce employee behaviour" Internal marketing functions as a continual internal 'up skilling' process. Basically to enhance the skill level of the employees. Apart from that some major area that should be looked upon while discussing about internal marketing involves the following:

- Alignment of the organization's purpose with employee behavior.
- Employees internalizing the core values of the organization.
- Motivation, reframing and empowerment of employee attitude.
- Inside-out management approach.
- Retaining a positive customer experience throughout the business objectives

Internalization of core values of the organization by the employees plays the biggest role in the whole internal marketing process. An employee is a brand in itself. How he treats the customers will ultimately show what outlook the company has for its customer.

Is the employee motivated and empowered enough? If it has been reflected in the behavior of the employees, that is the highly motivated attitude and empowered behavior, the organization will be perceived as an open cultured organization. Customers will like to be its part.

Internal marketing is one of the persuasive arts. It shares traits with both its parent, the plain white marketing, and with dark marketing. But internal marketing is an inside job. And it is a good thing. It is the art and science of influencing hearts and minds within an organization.

Internal marketing should provide your employees with:

- Information—a clear picture of your story, problem or plan
- Alignment—agreement on it
- Motivation—the desire to see your ideal future come true

All the elements people need in order to do the invisible part of their job, the part where they act as believers, cheerleaders, strong performers and agents of change. This process involves getting, sustaining and expanding their buy-in up front and holding onto their enthusiastic support for the duration.

Forget customers for a minute—forget patrons, clients, patients, students, whatever you call the people who buy what you sell. Let all the outsiders get along by themselves for the moment while you turn your attention to the men and women on your own team. Without them, you don't really exist as a force in the world. You may have a great product or service, but it's just a limp balloon until you fill it with the breath of all the managers, staff, board members, stockholders, and, if yours is a not-for-profit outfit, volunteers and loyal donors who make things happen for the organization. They are what give your organization its liftoff, its staying power and its push.

They can't do it alone, however. They need to know where they are supposed to be headed. They need to know why. And they need to know how to get there.

Internal marketing ought to operate on more than one front. If done right, it provides information, alignment and motivation at every stage, every level of, the organization as a whole, every aspect of the organization, every initiative within the whole.

Companies run for various external ways out to sell their products but the foremost thing that we keep in the secondary hidden shells is the people who work for us.

Recession can slow down our marketing expenditure, or we may stop our expansion plans, new strategies, launching of new products just to safeguard the organisation against financial loss.

Internal marketing does not need to see for the recessionary pressures. Employees are yours, organizations is yours, practices are also at your disposal. Connect with your people for good.

Internal marketing Do,s in recession:

1. Make it (Internal Marketing) relevant to the different segments of staff within the organisation
2. Let all members of staff engage with the organisations brand
3. Let staff undertake self evaluation exercises

4. Involve staff at all levels of the organisation
5. Identify internal stakeholders needs and wants
6. Choose the right staff and the right people for the job
7. Think about how to retain the motivation of employees
8. Reassure staff re merits of the organisations brand and communicate where possible that their jobs are safe
9. Constantly communicate with staff
10. Update staff on productivity and profit

