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Building effective communication between the employer's brand and students and young professionals

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Social media has become an integral part of a large company's media image and a key platform for communicating with students and young professionals as potential employees. Many companies build entire ecosystems of interaction with young people, including ambassador and educational programs, with social networks serving as the entry point. However, employer companies' communication often remains formal and one-way, creating a gap between the corporate image and the real expectations of the audience, which values authenticity and horizontal dialogue.

The relevance of this study stems from the need to rethink communication formats with young people: it is through social media content that the "psychological benefits" of the employer brand are transmitted today. According to the concept of T. Ambler and S. Barrow, trust and a sense of belonging form long-term loyalty in potential employees. The study examines these categories through the lens of "psychological contract" theory — a set of subjective expectations shaped by media communication long before employment.

The study's goal is to identify best practices for employer communication with young audiences on social media, pinpoint content genres and formats that help employers build trusting relationships with students and early-career professionals.

The empirical base consisted of an online survey of 98 students in engineering and IT specialties — the target audience for high-tech companies amid talent shortages. The sample included students from leading technical universities in the country: Bauman Moscow State Technical University, National Research Nuclear University MEPhI (with branches), Moscow Power Engineering Institute, Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Tomsk Polytechnic University, Novosibirsk State Technical University named after R.E. Alekseev, Kazan State Power Engineering University, and Far Eastern Federal University.

The survey comprised three blocks: open-ended questions about preferred channels and examples of successful communication; closed-ended questions with multiple choice; and open-ended questions on wishes for improving communication. A mixed-methods approach was used: quantitative analysis of closed questions, qualitative analysis of open responses, and benchmarking of leading company accounts by mention frequency ("Yandex," "Sber," VTB, "Alfa-Bank," "Nornickel," SIBUR).

The study found that content allowing students to "try on" the job generates the most interest: "behind-the-scenes of processes" (58 responses), employee lifestyle (55 responses), career advice (49 responses), and employee stories (44 responses). Among suggestions for genres and formats, short videos led (39 responses), followed by memes and trend adaptations (22 responses), and employee interviews and vlogs (21 responses).

Key criteria for subscribing to a corporate channel were: high-quality visuals (61 responses), a distinctive style (55 responses), regular updates (46 responses), and informal, "human" content (40 responses). Open responses highlighted demands for authentic, truthful, unpolished

content about the employer and junior roles: "first day on the job from a newbie's perspective," "stories of failures," "interview anecdotes," as well as suggestions for simple language and more audience interaction ("Q&A rubric," "announcements of contests and internships").

Thus, effective communication with young people requires employer brands to shift paradigms: from monologue to co-creation and UGC formats. Practical guidelines include creating content that ensures utility, authenticity, and interactivity. This bridges the strategic company image with audience expectations and narrows the gap in employer brand perception.

Источники и литература

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