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The Influence of Employer Branding in Talent Management in the Hotel Industry

Donagh Davern, Leo Jago & Margaret Deery

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the influence of employer branding in attracting and retaining talented employees, with a particular focus on millennial staff. The paper reviews literature in the area of talent management, employer branding and the millennial generation in the hotel industry and draws on the results of interviews with hotel General Managers. At a time when there is a shortage of talent to fill available positions in the hotel industry, this paper seeks to give hoteliers an improved understanding of the concepts of talent management and employer branding and their usage in the attraction and retention of staff, at a time when staff are in short supply and the traits and aspirations of the millennial generation are a concern for the sector.

Key Words: Talent Management, Employer Branding, Millennials, Hotel Industry.

Introduction

Leaders, practitioners and academics value the area of talent management, however, academic knowledge on the area is limited and further research is needed to give it an exact definition and to understand its boundaries (Krishnan and Scullion, 2016, Thunnissen, 2015, Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). D'Annunzio Green (2008, p. 807) refers to talent management as 'a holistic approach to human resource planning, aimed at strengthening organisational capability and driving business priorities, using a range of HR interventions'. From a business perspective, interest in the area of talent management emerged from the work of McKinsey in the 1990's, which highlighted the talent shortage in England during the high tech boom of the late 1990's and which differentiated one organisation from another (Collings, 2018, Olaka et al., 2018). Fuelled by the war for suitable talent and due to the dynamic and uncertain nature of today's highly competitive markets, businesses face major challenges globally in terms of talent management and the area is of continuing strategic importance, while a long-term approach is needed towards developing talent to ensure employees support the strategic mission of a company (Joyce and Slocum, 2012, Vaiman et al., 2012, Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). Collings (2018) argues that a key challenge facing organisations today is ensuring that the area of talent management is aligned with the overall organisational strategy, but there is a strong belief that it is a central concern of organisation leaders (Collings, 2014).

Companies who display positive talent-management practices are strategic in their sourcing, attraction, selection, training, development and promotion of employees in the organisation (Barron, 2008). Declining birth rates, an aging workforce and other changes in the demographic patterns of countries, mean that the area of talent management is of significant

importance (McDonnell et al., 2017, Lub et al., 2012, Vaiman et al., 2017). In particular, the expectations of the millennial generation in the workplace have heightened the challenge posed by talent management and it is proposed that the area of talent management be considered key to the achievement of postmodern business success (Maxwell and Maclean, 2008, Scott and Revis, 2008). At a time where talent is scarce and there are many choices available in the employment market, the attraction and retention of talent is vital to a company's competitiveness (McDonnell et al., 2017, Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2007).

Defining Talent Management

There is both a lack of clarity in the definition of talent management and a debate as to its conceptual boundaries, and although the concept originally focused only on the area of recruitment, its focus has broadened and it now also includes the attraction, retention, development and transitioning of talented employees in the organisation (Vaiman et al., 2012, Collings and Mellahi, 2009, D'Annunzio Green, 2008). Talent management concerns the development and fostering of new workers and is related to areas such as the interviewing, hiring, orientation and integration of new employees into an organisation's culture, along with their subsequent development and retention (Barron, 2008). It is proposed by Vaiman et al. (2012) that talent management encompasses organisational activities which embody the attraction, selection, development and retention of employees, particularly for roles which are essential to overall organisational effectiveness. The implication is that the use of talent management involves a more strategic and sophisticated approach and the alignment of internal organisational systems with factors in the external environment (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008).

Empirical research on the area of talent management is limited, however there is evidence of 'wide differences between the rhetoric of formal policies and the reality of what happens in practice' (Vaiman et al., 2012, p. 926). Collings and Mellahi (2009) propose that the pursuit of a talent management strategy begins with the systematic identification of those positions which are the prime contributors to the organisation's achievement of competitive advantage.

Collings (2018) posits that talent management includes the development of a human resource architecture which is differentiated from other firms, ensuring the development of individuals to fill strategic roles in the organisation. It is worrying to note that in the PWC (2017) HR Director Pulse Survey, only 12% of participants deemed their organisation's Employer Value Proposition (EVP) to be an effective talent sourcing tool and only 31% of Irish businesses actually operated a clearly defined talent management programme to identify key talent in the organisation.

Talent Management in the Hospitality Industry

A key factor in understanding the use of talent management is the industry context that is being considered (Maxwell and Maclean, 2008). The area of talent management is a problematic concept in the context of the hospitality industry due to its poor perceived reputation as an employer, and the sector has found it difficult to attract motivated, trained and qualified

employees who will deliver on its service promises (Barron, 2008, Baum, 2008). Talent management is of great importance in the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly as it faces such challenges in the areas of recruitment and retention, spurred on by the labour intensive nature of the industry, the high levels of customer service expectations, management's focus on minimising labour costs, a lack of job security, a lack of promotional opportunities and the low status of occupations in the industry (Deery and Jago, 2015, Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008). Indeed, high levels of both employee turnover and labour mobility in the hospitality workforce are major issues and hospitality employees are increasingly departing from the sector to work in other industries, which boast better working conditions (Robinson et al., 2014, Lub et al., 2012). Commitment to providing employees with a positive experience and in-turn strengthening the company's employer brand, is becoming more prevalent in the hospitality sector. It is widely recognised that investment in talented individuals in the hotel industry will lead to immediate organisational benefits (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008, Scott and Revis, 2008).

The area of talent management is a prime challenge for the hospitality sector, as the sector struggles to maintain a stable workforce and where areas such as pay, work-life balance, training, excessive workloads and organisational culture are particular challenges (Deery, 2008). Those organisations that project a positive employer brand, along with opportunities for career progression, will in-turn motivate candidates to apply to work in those organisations (Willie et al., 2008).

The expectations of the millennial generation in terms of their employment in tourism and hospitality, offers a heightened challenge in terms of the concept of talent management (Maxwell and Maclean, 2008). Operators in the hospitality sector need to have an open-minded approach to both training and development, allowing all staff to enhance their skills and knowledge, while constantly identifying and acknowledging talent in their own organisations (Baum, 2008). The development of a talent management system will ensure that potential candidates for open positions are identified and prepared in a timely manner (Scott and Revis, 2008). Indeed, the successful integration and development of skilled workers is posited as the key to a successful hospitality and tourism sector (Barron, 2008).

Talent Management and Millennials

Each generation has its own unique set of values, skills and characteristics which are shaped by their stage in life and the millennial generation is no different, meaning that employers have to comprehend the underlying value structure of this generation (Gursoy et al., 2013, Saba, 2013, Park and Gursoy, 2012, Zopiatis et al., 2011). The birth years of demographic groups which are present in the workplace, are a source of debate as highlighted by authors such as Stewart et al. (2016) and Lub et al. (2012), but for the purposes of this work, millennials are referred to as those aged from eighteen to their late-thirties. In this research, Generation X refers to those in their late thirties to mid-fifties and the terms millennial and Generation Y are used interchangeably. The hospitality sector is reliant on the millennial generation as a source of labour and authors such as Zopiatis *et al.* (2012, p. 118), suggest that adaption to the millennial employees needs will be 'one of the most challenging tasks of hospitality stakeholders in the next decade'. The importance of recognising the needs of millennial

workers is highlighted by the fact that they became the majority generation in the workplace in 2015 (Heymann, 2017). Vaiman et al. (2012) propose that the area of talent management decision making in an organisation will strongly influenced by the millennial generation.

Awareness of the differences between generations can lead managers to a more positive work environment and greater productivity in the workplace (Gursoy et al., 2013, Cahill and Sedrak, 2012, Glass, 2007). Millennials have significantly different demands to previous generations and managers in the hospitality industry face significant challenges in dealing with millennial cohort members in the workplace, as they grew up in an era of instant communication, they value freedom and leisure time, and they have higher expectations in terms of pay and promotion (Gursoy et al., 2013). Therefore, the first step which a company must take is to adapt its HR policies and practices to suit the generational needs of millennials (Gursoy et al., 2013, Barron, 2008, Glass, 2007). It is suggested by Rothschild (2016) that retention issues are at their peak when dealing with millennials and that the hotel industry requires new paradigms to attract, motivate and retain this generation of workers – a generation which is much different from its generational predecessors (Rees, 2017, Wiggins, 2016). Managers now have to fully understand the motivators of the millennial generation, in order to mitigate negative incidents which might occur due to the lack of employee motivation or increased employee turnover (Brown et al., 2015). The motivation of millennials and management's response to their attitude toward organisational membership and commitment are areas which HR must address, and it is now recognised that the organisation shouldn't try to mould millennials to fit the organisation and should instead adapt their organisation to suit the needs of millennials (Rees, 2017, Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010).

By better understanding the characteristics of generations, appropriate management styles can be adopted and HR strategies can be introduced which address the particular needs and expectations of a particular generation (Barron et al., 2014, Lub et al., 2012, Glass, 2007). The millennial generation has a range of unique work-related characteristics which need to be understood by employers so that they can implement strategic employment initiatives targeted at this generation, such as the importance of employer branding in the attraction and retention of talent to an organisation (Vaiman et al., 2012). The changing generational attitudes that are being experienced in the hospitality sector are a prime reason to review the impact and importance of talent management on the sector (Barron, 2008). The greater mobility of talent, the under-representation of females in senior management and the creation of trust, pride and fun in the organisation, are all key considerations in developing a talent management strategy linked to the corporate culture of the organisation (Vaiman et al., 2012). Lub et al. (2012) argue that the needs and behaviours of the various generations in the workforce must be acknowledged when it comes to the concept of talent management in the hospitality industry. Management and strategic decision makers in firms in the area of talent management will need to understand the important role which employer branding plays in the attraction and retention of employees from the millennial generation (Vaiman et al., 2012)

Talent Management and Employer Branding

Watson (2008) cites the image of the hospitality industry as a key issue to be considered for the enhancement of talent management. The concept of the employer brand has become

an essential component of the HR function in international hotel companies (Cheung et al., 2014). The employer brand is quite different to the marketing image that the public/customers of the firm may have, as it is the image associated with the company as an employer and exhibiting a positive employer brand is very important to the attraction and retention of talent in an organisation (Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2007). An employer brand includes areas such as employee flexibility and the creation of an improved work atmosphere, which can be important elements in attracting and retaining talent in an organisation (Krishnan and Scullion, 2016). Investment in employees is a key area in managing talent and differentiating one firm's HR offering from others and Collings (2018) argues that this investment is far broader than simply rewarding employees. Indeed Collings (2015) encourages a focus on developing talent for an organisational context and combining both internal development with external recruitment as part of the development of a suitable talent pool.

Traditionally, the hospitality industry has suffered from a poor employer image at an industry level based on its reputation for menial jobs, lack of career opportunities and limited rewards, making it a less likely career choice for the millennial generation (Barron, 2008). The general reputation of the firm in question, or its employer brand, is highlighted as a strong retention driver among staff and it is essential that organisations identify the company attributes which employees find most attractive, if they are to link the employer brand with the identity of the organisation and the interests of employees (Maxwell and Knox, 2009, Moroko and Uncles, 2009). There are many advantages to a company creating a positive employment brand, including the increased retention of employees, improved employee relations, along with being able to offer lower salaries than those of competitors with poor employer brands (Berthon et al., 2005). Comparative analysis carried out by Kucherov and Zavyalova (2012), found that companies who had a strong employer brand had lower staff turnover, and invested more in training and development and as a result this contributed towards increased employee retention. Indeed strong employer brands lead to an improvement in both employee relations and employee retention (Franca and Pahor, 2012).

Research Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with eighteen hotel General Managers in Cork City and County as part of a larger research project. For this research, convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling technique and a sample was selected which focused on the members of the *Irish Hotels Federation (IHF)* within the Cork Region. Cork is Ireland's second largest city and comprises various sizes of hotels, a mix of branded and unbranded products and a range of star grades. The entire sampling frame for this study was the Cork IHF branch membership, which has sixty-four members and the eighteen interviews represent just over 28% of the total population. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information from key senior hotel managers on the subject of employer branding, the retention of the millennial generation and their use of talent management in their hotels. An interview guide was constructed and utilised throughout the interview process and all interviews were transcribed. The data analysis methodology which was adopted to analyse the interviews used in this research was template analysis. Template analysis is a way of thematically organising and analysing qualitative data, which is usually produced in the form of interview scripts (Stein et al., 2018, King, 2004). Codes are produced which represent themes which occur in the textual

data and a template is produced which represents the relationships which the researcher defines, most commonly in a hierarchical structure (King, 2004). The coding template is the central component of the technique and it can be applied to further data, revised and refined as necessary (Brooks et al., 2015). The method has been widely used in both organisational and management research and allows the flexibility to adapt itself to the particular needs of a study (Brooks et al., 2015). The hierarchical nature of coding used in template analysis allows the research to be analysed at varying levels of specificity – with broader higher codes giving a good general view of the overall direction of an interview, while lower-detailed codes allow for fine distinctions to be made both within and between the cases (King, 2004). Template analysis normally commences with some pre-defined or a priori codes, which can assist in guiding the analysis (King, 2004) and in the case of this research, these were identified from the review of literature.

The interviews were coded using QSR's NVivo software package and layered into the previously coded secondary research which had been created from the literature review, to identify themes which emerged. To ensure consistency, both in terms of the interview coding and aligned thinking, an internationally recognised form of inter-rater reliability testing (IRR) was administered in order to provide external validation of the coding. To safeguard anonymity, direct quotations used are broadly referred to in the findings.

Interview Findings

Staff Retention

One of the largest areas for concern in the service sector is staff retention and this issue is particularly acute when it comes to the millennial cohort. It is clear that issues with regard to retention have a negative effect on the customer experience (Mosquera, 2015, Robinson et al., 2014, Knox and Freeman, 2006, Earle, 2003). Irish hoteliers are operating in a challenging environment when it comes to staff retention, with fourteen of eighteen interviewees finding the current situation either difficult or challenging. The retention of food and beverage staff is an area of particular concern for hoteliers, as is the reception area, where it seems staff are attracted to other industries such as call-centres which offer better hours and less-pressurised working conditions. A number of the hoteliers felt that retention was suffering as staff were looking for set hours and a better work-life balance outside of the hotel industry, with one interviewee stating that he has lost chefs to a work environment which is a lot less exciting for them, but which offers set hours in a lower pressure environment.

Strategic Talent Management

Only six of the hoteliers interviewed had a strategic talent management plan in place for the attraction, identification, development, retention and deployment of talent for the business, with three of these hotels forming part of an international hotel group and the other three being part of an indigenous Irish hotel group. A number of the other respondents seemed to have integrated the concept using an exclusive approach, offering it only to a number of staff. A passive approach was taken by one hotelier, who commented that “we’re conscious of the fact that we need one, but we haven’t got around due to business”.

A number of the hotels were moving towards more strategic talent management, while others were far ahead in their strategic direction with one group hotelier responding “yes, we have a specific talent management department with four people in it which has been put in place over the last twelve months”. Another hotel, which has just been taken over by a group, is changing its strategic direction, as the General Manager indicated that for their new owners the areas of employee retention and succession planning are a priority.

In one of the 5 Star Hotels, the General Manager emphasised the importance of talent attraction by responding that “...from the moment someone comes in for an interview we want to show that we are committed to them, so I meet them and show them our commitment to our team and make positive statements, reinforce the brand and the environment they will work in”. However, the integration of a talent management strategy is not just important at the upper end of the market, as one group hotelier in a three star hotel confirmed indicating that they had a talent management strategic plan in place “and it is utilised”.

A number of the respondents are now looking at succession planning, with one hotel identifying forty people in a recent succession planning meeting looking at the further roles in the organisation that needed to be developed. Another hotelier emphasised the importance of grooming staff for future positions in the organisation and developing a body of knowledge on the staff so as to recognise their talents when positions become available.

Generational Influences

One hotelier felt that there is a body of work to be done in convincing Generation X parents, along with their Generation Y children, about the viability of the industry as an employer and that there is a need to change people’s mind-sets, which are based on their past experience of the industry. Another hotelier believes that members of Generation Y are not afraid to speak their mind and are more open and so will tell you more, including if they are suffering from stress or depression. She also finds it a challenge that members of the Generation X cohort were used to going directly to the manager with issues, so she now tries to direct them to the Heads of Department first out of respect for their position.

Employer Branding

Nearly half of the interviewees stated that the image of the hotel industry in Ireland as an employer was not good, with some stating that it had a mixed image of good and bad, while others said the image was improving. A number of the hoteliers believe that more work was needed in schools and with parents to promote the sector’s image as an employer, with one respondent stating that members of Generation X that had worked in the industry and are now parents, need to be convinced that the poor experiences which they may have had working in hotels are a thing of the past. One hotelier stated that the industry was still seen as a stop-gap rather than a career, while another expressed frustration at hearing people ask those in the industry when they are going to get a real job. A number of respondents believe that work needs to be done on the perception of the industry, while one hotelier expressed his desire that the Government invest, through incentives, in getting those who had left the industry for family reasons back into employment in the sector. The perception of unsocial hours in the industry was a concern for one hotelier, but he stated that management practices have changed, however, and so have younger employee’s perceptions of the nature of what a job should entail. The emergence of indigenous hotel groups was suggested by

one respondent as bringing a more formal HR structure that is aiming to improve employee retention. One hotelier expressed his belief and worry that the sector's image has actually worsened since he was a student and employment in the industry is now perceived to be "pretty much at the bottom of the food chain". The majority of interviewees felt that the hotel sector suffered from a perception of long hours and challenges in terms of gaining a work-life balance, with some stating that a perception of low wages was an issue which needed to be dealt with by the industry.

All of the hoteliers interviewed believe that the majority of their employees identified with the business and had pride in being part of it, with one hotelier emphasising the need for employees to buy into the organisational culture, while another stated that it was important to get the message out to the team that success for the business is success for everyone. He also expressed the need to identify those employees who may not be happy and "either bring things to an end, or recover". The majority of General Managers interviewed expressed their belief that a successful business has a better employer brand, with one hotelier referring to the knock-on effect that one has on the other and another stating that "success breeds success" in this regard.

One respondent says that a lack of communication of the improved conditions which are evident in the hotel sector is an issue, while a number blamed the historically negative perception of the industry for the image issue. They also expressed concern that middle management, who were hired during periods of staff shortages, haven't helped the reputation of the sector in many cases as they had weak management skills and didn't treat their teams as they should. There is a lack of awareness of the hotel industry as a career according to one respondent and the sector is underrated as it hasn't been promoted properly. One hotelier referred to what he believes was the past "exploitation" of employees in the hotel sector. Whilst this is of concern, worryingly one hotelier believes that

"I think the poster boy for the hospitality industry is somebody earning €9.55 an hour, not being upskilled, not being trained in any great way and that person feels as if they are being abused (which is a strong word), but they feel they're being taken advantage of by the conditions that they are forced to endure".

One respondent stated that there have been lots of activities to promote the industry in the past few years, but with the best intentions they have not succeeded and he believes that the sector needs to be promoted to children at a much younger age. One hotelier warns that with the younger generation, who are more image focused

"No one wants to be part of an environment which is frowned upon, or seen as a poor employee, as they miss that sense of pride."

It is interesting to note that despite some misgivings, all of the interviewees would support a family member who expressed an interest in being employed in the Irish hotel industry, with some stating that it makes a young person more outgoing and social due to their interaction with the public, and that it was great training. All but one of the respondents would encourage a family member who expressed an interest in studying a hotel-industry related course at third level. In terms of how they felt about the way that their own hotel's employer brand is perceived in the market, half of the interviewees believed they had a strong or positive employer brand, while five felt that their employer brand was improving. One hotelier stated that his hotel had

made a significant investment in upgrading staff facilities recently, in order to improve the employer brand and employee satisfaction. One respondent stated that when it comes to the employer brand, it is crucial that “it’s not all talk, that there is actually action”, while another worried that some people might be frightened by their employer brand due to their exacting standards. A body of work has to be performed to fill the gap between the perception of their hotel brand in the market and their brand as an employer, according to one respondent, while another expressed his satisfaction with how his employer brand was perceived on social media channels. One hotelier stated that he has found it easier to recruit staff due to an improvement in his employer brand in recent years. Three respondents expressed their belief that the development of a positive employer brand in the local community was essential to success.

Ten of the interviewees stated that they consciously brand their business as an employer of choice, with others stating that they were embarking on that strategy. One hotelier stated that they are constantly trying to provide a different bespoke experience for customers and are now trying to do the same for their staff by “offering a different type of place to work” and this begins with their professionally graphically designed job advertisements. A number of hoteliers said they promote their hotel’s employment experience on social media, with one considering the use of a Snapchat account to reach millennial cohort members. The importance of word-of-mouth promotion through existing employees was also identified as important. One hotelier said that they have advanced their hotels employer branding strategies by taking on a company who promote the employment experience and they have made social media videos to promote this, while another has commissioned a video promoting the team and the hotel’s family-values to be used for promotional purposes. Another hotelier, whose hotel is part of an international brand, stated that they appoint employees as “brand ambassadors” to promote their two hotel brands.

All but one of the interviewees believes that branding an employer improves employee retention. Fourteen of the hoteliers interviewed expressed the belief that the hotel industry in Ireland recognises the importance of developing an employer brand. One hotelier said that this has arisen as the sector becomes stronger and less seasonal and as there is less home-grown talent from which to choose. However, another hotelier stated that this was due to the needs of the new generation coming into the workplace. One respondent said that larger hotel groups would have a significantly higher regard for the importance of the employer brand than smaller players, with another agreeing that the large companies have brought improved structures, while one hotelier stated that while there is an appreciation of its importance particularly in a tight labour market, there are still, what he termed, “cowboy employers” who don’t care. The need for greater promotion and public relations regarding positive hotel sector employer brands was emphasised by another respondent, while another questioned what he believes to be the myth that Irish hoteliers don’t care about their employer brand.

In order to improve the image of the hotel industry in the minds of millennial cohort members, one hotelier felt that a public relations campaign was needed which would be supported³ by Government, along with industry representative bodies such as the IHF and *Restaurant Association of Ireland (RAI)*, to show the industry in a more positive light. A number of respondents concurred stating that the industry needs to better brand and market itself. One hotelier proposed a public relations campaign for the industry, while another felt that

it was important to connect with students at second level to increase their appreciation for the industry. One respondent goes beyond this, stating that the sector needs to access children at primary school level to convince them of the merits of working in the sector. Staff development and career-path establishment are strategies which hoteliers feel are essential to improving the perception of the hotel industry, with one hotelier proposing that working on shift patterns, hours of work and the eradication of split shifts in the sector, are essential strategies in order to improve the industry's brand.

Conclusion

It is essential that talent management practices are strategic in nature and offer support to the foundation capabilities of a business and act as a supporting strategy leading to desired overall business goals (Joyce and Slocum, 2012). The area of talent management is critical to strategic human resource management, is an area which is constantly evolving and must be linked to the overall strategy of a company (Vaiman et al., 2012). It is proposed that this strategic approach to talent management, combined with an employer branding strategy, can offer competitive advantage to a business, as earlier proposed by Watson (2008). At a time when the unemployment rate is low and there is high demand for skilled talent, this causes increased pressure on firms as Collings (2015) posits that labour markets drive talent management. The boundaries of the term talent management are still not well defined, but in its broad focus which includes employee attraction and retention, it is clear that it can be combined with a positive employer brand to tackle the issues which the hotel industry faces in the war for talent. Talent Management is used to differentiate organisations in a competitive labour marketplace and employer branding is a key element to distinguish a company as a good employer, just as its marketing brand distinguishes it from competition in the consumer marketplace. These strategies are essential at a time when the hotel industry is struggling to both attract and retain members of the millennial generation.

It is essential to differentiate the organisations human resource architecture to both attract and retain talent for an organisation and the area of talent management is a source of competitive advantage in a tight labour market (Vaiman et al., 2012). Projecting a positive image of the employer brand in terms of the attraction and retention of staff, and in terms of gaining commitment and motivating the talent pool, should be an integral part of the overall human resource strategy. This is essential in the Irish hotel sector, where a poor perceived reputation has led to an overall poor employer brand for the sector. Promotion of the possibilities for rapid advancement, developmental opportunities, job security and flexibility are essential if the hotel industry is to counteract the negative perception of its employer brand and compete with other sectors in a labour market which is already tight. This study proposes that the hotel sector needs to be more strategic in its approach to talent management, in the development of a positive employer brand and in counter-acting the perceptions which older generations have of working in the industry and which they are now passing on to the emerging generations. It is suggested that a sectoral public relations drive be put in place to promote the industry as an employer and to highlight its positive traits in terms of areas such as progression opportunities, development and flexibility. This employer branding exercise needs to start in schools, but should also target third level students, school guidance counsellors and parents.

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