

The Role of Employer Branding in Attracting and Retaining Information and Communication Technology Talents

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Abstract:- The Fourth Industrial Revolution dramatically increased the demand for information and communication technology specialists, globally. According to human resource specialists and industry experts, competition between companies to attract talents in this area has intensified all over the world. Moreover, this is further aggravated by the fact that information and communication technology specialists can work remotely from different locations and place of residence no longer limits their employment in companies in other countries. Moreover, the establishment of remote work was remarkably accelerated during COVID-19 pandemic. Recruitment and retention of talents is related with number of challenges in Georgian information and communication technology companies as well. In addition, the specific characteristics and preferences of the "Millennials" and generation "Z" (which includes most of the information and communication technology specialists) should be considered.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role and importance of employer's brand for information and communication technology talents. The overall objective was to identify means to attract and retain these talents in the face of fierce global competition. The main question of the conducted research was - what role and importance does employer's brand have for the talents of this sphere?

A combination of mixed-research methods has been applied. Initially qualitative research, in-depth interviews were conducted with human resources and employer brand specialists, who are actively working to attract and retain talents in information and communication technologies. At the second stage, in the framework of the quantitative research, the talents of the same direction were surveyed through a structured questionnaire.

Based upon the results, the employer brand is a topical issue, both, for talents and organizations. Moreover, challenges were revealed that are being met in our reality and are important parts of the employer brand. According to the results, the main challenge perceived by employers is attraction of information and technological talents and selection of right motivational systems for them. Although the field is still in the early stages of development in Georgia, companies are increasingly emphasizing employer branding strategies in the field of human resource management and are willing to incur financial costs for this. Companies do not

spare time nor money to attract the best talent. On the other hand, the results of quantitative research show that the employer brand has quite big impact on the perception of talents towards companies. While selecting an employer they pay attention to various important components of the employer brand.

Keywords:- Employer Branding, Employee Value Proposition (EVP), Information and communication technologies, Tech Talents.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of extreme transformation, global business faces highly-intensified competition, where customers have become more informed and knowledgeable consumers. These changes impacted not only the way things are perceived by people but also the patterns of reasoning and communication. Nowadays, to satisfy demands of consumers or employees organizations need to focus on continuous research, forecasting and being a step ahead of their competitors. Furthermore, business environment faces many challenges, such as: intense global competition, rapid technological changes, knowledge economy growth and need for expertise and resilience. Accordingly, these factors influence labor market, as well. Many managers suggest that amount and competences of existing talents are not adequate for dramatically increased demand on the market. For this reason, attraction of right talents has become even more complicated. Fight for talents, when competitors seek for candidates of the same profile reflects on the time that companies spend on recruitment processes.

Nowadays, candidates assess not only their role in the organization and salary but the company as a whole. At that time, global labor market offers wide variety of choices to highly qualified talents. Consequently, companies should realize strategies for additional value creation to become "top employers". However, with consideration of specific characteristics of talents working in information and communication sphere, this task is becoming more and more complicated. Furthermore, branding is becoming more significant and important to manage appropriately, in organizational context. Decent strategies to attract and retain talents will grant competitive advantage to organizations in the era of "war of talents" (1).

In addition to the above-cited factors, COVID-19 pandemics triggered substantial changes on the labor market. New term, coined during pandemics and movement in business is "YOLO economics". The acronym "YOLO" stands for "you only live once". Pandemic realigned

priorities for humans, globally (2). According to the survey conducted in 2021, by company Microsoft, 40% of employees plans to quit a job (more than 160,000 people were interviewed). The major impact of pandemics on organizations was modification of working style. The vast majority of companies had to switch to remote work setup. This in turn brought transformation in labor force – for the majority of talents working from home or from any desirable geographic place became much more comfortable than in the office. If prior to pandemics, the main concern for companies was to create excellent working spaces, this time emerged trend was implementing and setting up high level technological communication channels and creation of safe, healthy working environment for returned employees. One of the post-pandemic challenges is socialization, which is a consequence of prolonged social distancing. Additionally, another important novelty in organizations is helping employees to overcome stress and offer psychological support through different activities (3).

Results of the research conducted by Gensler in 2020 (where 6000 companies were surveyed) revealed that for employees it was still important to communicate with colleagues in the office, to attend meetings. Moreover, results confirmed that virtual collaboration platforms, such as Zoom, Webex or others cannot substitute effectiveness of face-to-face interaction for personnel (4). Consequently, the office culture and membership of collegial community reflects positively on employee performance and psychological stress. The newest trend produced by merging distance and in-office work is hybrid working style.

It is becoming more and more complicated for organizations to adapt with existing environment and to compete with big companies. This became more evident during pandemics and in post-pandemic period, when remote work models unlocked greater opportunities for local talents to work in any company or any country, worldwide. This in turn further aggravated demand-supply problem in technology field talents. Besides existing deficit, information and communication technology talents differ by specific characteristics. To illustrate, their perception and attitudes with regard to employer and business are different. Accordingly, it is important to consider every psychological factor while working on employer branding. New and digital business models require review of existing organizational and business cultures and tailoring them on talents (5).

Talent recruitment is crucially important for companies to gain competitive advantage, as significant as any other aspect of business. This means that talent employment, development and retention is not one-time process and needs continuous development and refinement (6).

Human resources managers of companies cite recruitment and retention of information and communication technology talents as a significant challenge. The vast majority of tech talents are millennials or generation “Z” representatives. Every next generation of employees differs from the previous one, with regard to needs, preferences, expectations from employers, reasoning process

and working style. However, in the digital era, generation constituting labor market is much more different than previous generations and this complicates recruitment process even further (7).

Emerging global talent market and opening economical borders influences Georgia’s labor market, as well. According to the IT talent market research, conducted in 2021, by Georgian recruitment and consulting company Insource, these talents quite frequently receive job offers from various companies. To illustrate, 25% of respondents received a job offer more than five times in last three months, 17% -three times, 23% -four times. Regarding the factors they pay attention to, while evaluating companies- 93% prefers reimbursement, 80% job content 65% technologies, flexible work schedule 62% (8).

Modern business journals emphasize that creation of strong network of new generation’s information and communication technology talents, transformation of business models to tailor their needs and wants is not only beneficial for business wellbeing but is necessary for the future. Abundance of researches and literature review reveals that despite existing challenges, employer branding’s every strategy or campaign should be targeted to engage this generation talents (9).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role and importance of employer’s brand for information and communication technology talents, on the example of Georgia’s private sector. The overall objective was to identify means to attract and retain this talent in the face of fierce global competition. The main question of the conducted research was – which components of employer’s brand influence interest towards the company in information and communication technology talents? Consequently, the goals of the research were: to assess awareness about employer branding in Georgian companies; to identify how employer branding helps in talent recruitment and retention; to study what real value and benefit does employer branding brings for the company.

II. METHODOLOGY

A combination of mixed-research methods has been applied. Initially qualitative research, in-depth interviews were conducted with human resources and employer brand specialists, who are actively working to attract and retain talent in information and communication technologies. The purpose of in-depth interviews was to evaluate opinions of professionals with regard to research topic.

Respondents for in-depth interviews were selected based on following criteria: employer branding and talent recruitment specialists in private sector who had work relations with information and communication technology talents. Respondents were from different sectors – banking, gambling and tele-communications, where these talents are mostly concentrated. Overall, eleven in-depth interviews were conducted. Duration of interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 1.5 hour.

Respondents were identified using LinkedIn platform. Interviews were semi-structured and conducted on zoom and Teams platforms. Based on respondents' informed consent interviews were recorded (video-audio). On the basis of recordings detailed transcripts were prepared and processed by content analysis method.

At the second stage, quantitative research was conducted. More specifically, information and communication technology talents were surveyed using online structured questionnaire. Overall, 270 respondents participated. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate tech talents' perceptions and attitudes towards employer brand. Furthermore, the questionnaire was distributed in specialized closed groups where the majority of this sphere's talents are concentrated and sent in private messages on LinkedIn and Facebook platforms. The questionnaire was prepared according to the findings of in-depth interviews and literature review. Prior to the research, instrument was piloted with seven respondents and refined accordingly. Among respondents eighteen individuals were working in public organizations or living and working abroad. Therefore, 252 questionnaires were counted as valid for the research purposes and analyzed.

III. RESULTS

A. Employer branding in modern organizations and its significance

During in-depth interviews employer branding and talent recruitment professionals were asked to share information about existing challenges regarding employer branding in Georgia and their opinions how employer's brand can assist organizations. According to the opinions of respondents, employer branding has substantial role in talent recruitment and retention. *"This is organization's unique proposal, which is tailored exactly to its employees and potential candidates"*. However, based on respondents' views, employer branding is still in its development process and awareness is still low in Georgian companies, in this regard. In most cases organizations unconsciously implement these practices. Interviewed professionals emphasize that new positions start to emerge in companies, such as happiness officer, HR marketing, employer brand specialist, which indicates increasing awareness in companies.

Among the key issues to evaluate during interviews was: how difficult companies find tech and IT talent recruitment; communicating with them; which practices are used and what importance they give to employer branding. As it shows, recruitment of tech and IT talents is the biggest challenge for the companies. This is influenced by changes brought by pandemic, as well as by international companies opening branches in Georgia and adopting Georgian labor market. According to the respondents, LinkedIn platform is most common headhunting channel, which makes it possible to connect to candidates directly and win over from one company to another.

In everyday life, behavior of tech and IT talents does not differ from other employees. COVID-19 pandemics further aggravated demand-supply problem and increased confidence in information and communication sphere talents. This is directly related with their increased desires regarding remote or hybrid working model. To cite one respondent's opinion: *"difference is created only by existing situation on the labor market. Since there is great demand on them, they know that will not be left unemployed and accordingly have relevant requests. This is the reason why retention of these talents is much more difficult and requires much greater efforts than other positions"*.

Concerning behavior and motivators, talent recruitment specialists shared that the main motivator is reimbursement. However, another half of respondents think that *"salary is motivator only for two months and they get used to it very soon"*. According to respondents' opinions, talents periodically receive many proposals. Consequently, reimbursement should be competitive and planned at the same time. *"They need to feel, that for instance, during one year their salary is growing and they work for perspective employer"*. Another important factor interesting for tech and IT talents is professional development. One of the respondents said that *"tech and IT talents are oriented on professional development and they choose employer by project types. The majority prefers diverse projects. They need autonomous environment, office atmosphere shouldn't be stressful, must be harmonious; communication should be easy with everyone, including manager. They should feel that company is the space that develops"*.

Tech and IT talents are attracted by interesting projects, they shouldn't be restricted to specific industry. They like development, commonly one-time trainings and are oriented on present day. According to two respondents, information and communication sphere talents actually realize how important is organizational culture. One example of this is that everyone gets bored of remote work. *"Before making the final proposal, we try to bring them in the office at least once, so that they can see what environment we have"*. The vast majority of interviewed professionals think that entertainment and different activities attract talents and they like similar everyday life.

Based on the respondent's opinions, traditional employer branding does not work in recruitment and retention of tech talents and companies need to learn to adapt quickly to make every day work full of novelties instead of long-term written strategies in branding. According to modern standards, employees demand environment tailored to them and oriented on continuous development, which represents a problem for the majority of Georgian companies. Consequently, employer, who's product or service is attractive to consumer, should be equally attractive for job seeker or employed individual. Modern trend demonstrates that reimbursement is not enough to attract and retain talents. Instead strengthening brand image and allocation of relevant resources is the right approach.

Furthermore, interviewed professionals unanimously confirmed marketing department’s role and involvement in development of branding strategies in their organizations. Among the interesting strategies and practices named by respondents is sharing employees’ every day work by digital advertisements. As a result of existing deficit on the market, companies refer to internship and mentoring programs. Even more, big companies have created their IT academies, where beginners are taught with perspective to be employed in the company.

B. Quantitative research findings

On the second stage of the research online survey was conducted and 270 information and communication technology talents participated. After excluding respondents from public sector companies and individuals working from another country 252 questionnaires were counted as valid. Among the respondents 55.2% works in local companies in Georgia, 42.4% in international companies and 2.4% were unemployed,at that moment.

The age distribution of respondents is illustrated on Diagram #1. As results show, the majority of respondents were in the 24-26 age range (24.6%), 27-29 (24.2 %), 21-23 years – 19.8%, 30-34- 19.9%, 35-39 – 5.6% etc. Among respondents 71% were male and 29% female.

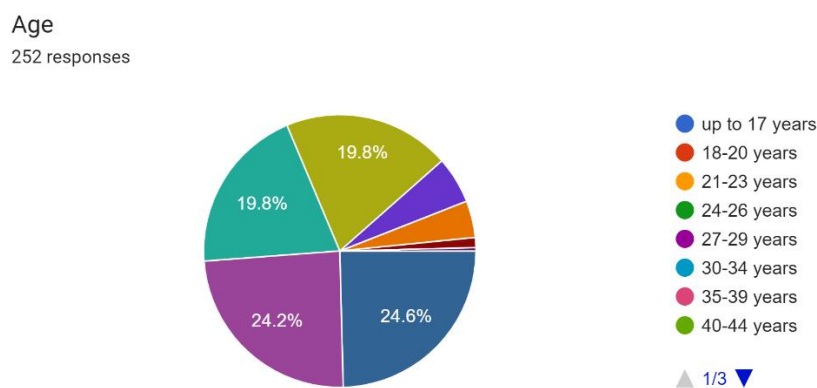


Diagram №. 1.

Regarding educational background of participants, 55.6% have bachelor’s degree, 27.4% master’s degree and 8.3% are self-taught.

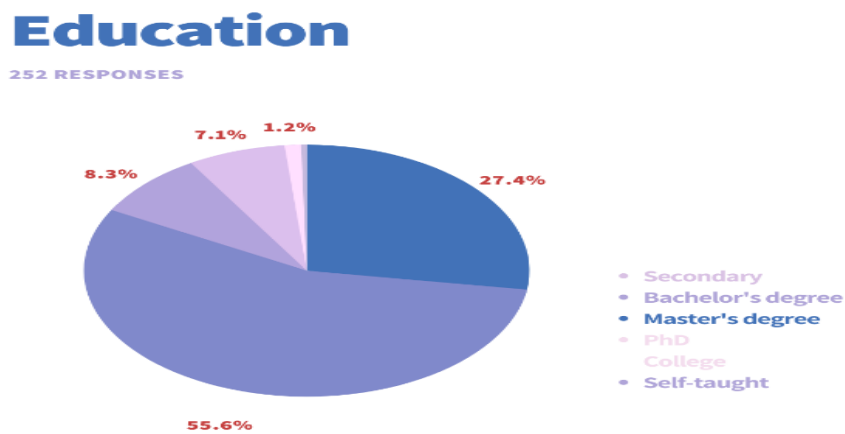


Diagram №2.

Positions that respondents occupy are diverse. The majority of participants are Backend developer (24.6%), 17,9% - Full-stackdeveloper, Frontend developer - 17.1%. In addition, among surveyed individuals were system administrators(6.7%), IT support specialists (4.8%), data base developer (4%), data base administrator (0.8%), Android developers(4.4%), IOS developers (3.6%), data engineers (2.8%), data scientists (2.4%), QA

specialists(2.4%), QA engineers (4%), chief of development direction (4%), Team Lead (5.6%), IT Product Owner (3.2%), IT Project Manager (4.5%), ML engineer (1.6%), DevOps engineer (3.6%) and UX-UI designer (9.9%).

Concerning work experience of respondents, 11.1% has over 12 years’ experience, 13.1% has up to one year’s experience and the majority (23.4%) had from 2 to 4 years’ experience.

Experience

252 RESPONSES

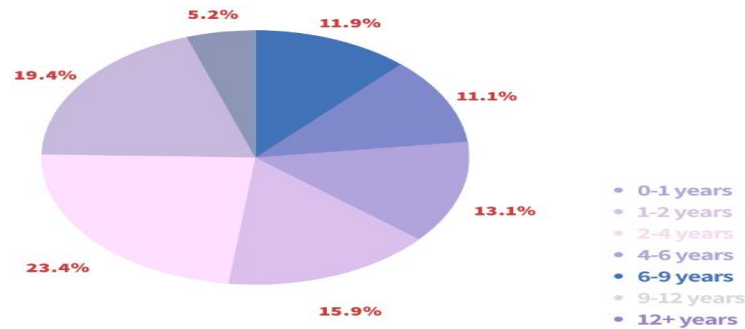


Diagram №3

One of the questions referred to channels, that information and communication technology talents use as means for searching new vacancies. Based on the results, for this purpose talents mostly utilize LinkedIn platform (88.5%); recruitment websites were indicated by 46.8% of respondents, social media by 23%, company websites - 22.6%. Moreover, university career centers were chosen by 4.4% and only 2.8% refers to recruitment agencies. Additionally, respondents in the comments listed channels that weren't mentioned in options but should be emphasized for research purposes: foreign employment platforms - Toptal, "Networking", freelance platforms. Among surveyed individuals were those who didn't use any of the mentioned channels and were not interested in searching new vacancies.

As the demand on information and communication technology talents is quite high, one of the questions inquired how often talents change jobs. According to the results, during last two years: 42.9% of respondents changed job once, 13.9% - two times, 5.6% - three times, 2% - more than four times and 35.7% didn't change at all.

Due to the actuality of the topic, area of interest was to evaluate which working format is most comfortable for talents. The majority of respondents prefer hybrid format (70.6%), which implies choosing between working at office or remotely; 22.2% desire distance work and 7.1% - to work from the office.

Which format of work is the most comfortable for you?

252 RESPONSES

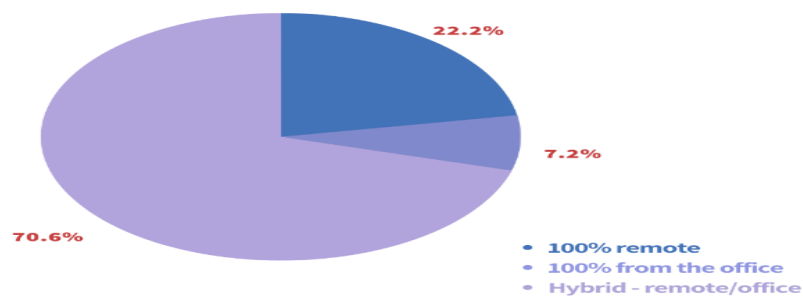


Diagram №4

Furthermore, respondents were asked which factors influence their interest toward employer/company. The options were: friends or relatives working in that company; news subscription on emails; social media (post, digital commercial); participation in events organized by company. As it figures out, friends or relatives working in the company have influence on 17.06% of respondents. Next is participation in events organized by the company (16.2%) and 11.5% of surveyed individuals consider social media as the most important factor. As results demonstrated, news

about the company subscribed on emails do not make any impact.

Still another question asked respondents to rank each of the listed factors by significance. These factors were selected according to the findings of in-depth interviews and literature review - the most prevailed needs and motivators for talents. The purpose of this question was to assess which factors are most or least important for them. According to the results, 79.4% of respondents pay greatest attention to

career development, for 77.8% the most important factor is decent management and for 70.6% relationships with team members. Moreover, 70.2% of participants indicated financial benefits (reimbursement, bonuses, rewards) and the same number of respondents (70.2%) said Work-Life balance is the most important. In addition, significant factors are: recognition (“to recognize my role in the company”), contributing in decision making (56.3%), possibility to work remotely (54%), implementation of innovative solutions in organizations (54%). It should be mentioned, that 7.1% of respondents think that non-monetary benefits (for instance, insurance, gym, Teambuilding) are not important at all.

Furthermore, in one of the questions respondents were asked to imagine situation as if they were receiving job proposals from two competitor companies, at the same time. They were supposed to rank important factors on 1 to 5 scale (where 1 is not important and 5 – very important). As results demonstrate, according to the opinions of respondents the most important factor is financial benefit

(76.6%); the second most significant factor is utilizing newest technologies for work (Tools, Frameworks, Libraries) – chosen by 58.3% of participants and 51.6% indicated opportunity to work remotely. Besides, 15.07% think that the number of co-workers in a department is not important while making decision. While, 44.8% of respondents perceive that reputation of the organization and brand are substantial.

To continue, in scope of the survey, respondents were supposed to answer question – which type of projects or products they prefer to work on – internal products of particular company or working on various projects/products periodically. As the results illustrate, 53.6% of respondents chose working on various products/projects periodically, whereas 46.4% indicated working on internal projects/products.

If you had a choice, which one would you choose?

252 RESPONSES

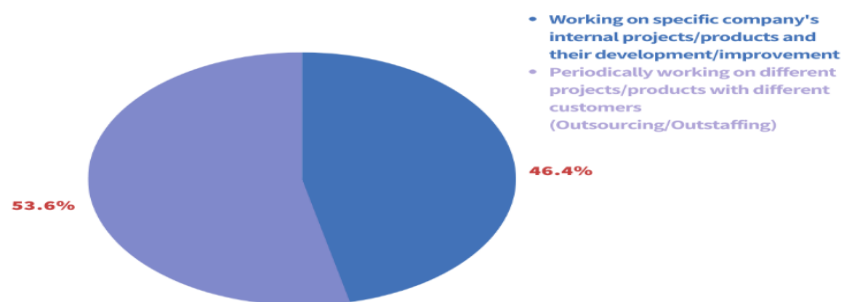


Diagram №5

Moreover, respondents were asked to choose between two employers. As it reveals, 59.1% of respondents chooses company with multiple years of expertise, with established and tested processes, work ethic, culture, discipline to which

they need to adapt. Whereas, 40.9% chooses start up, where work ethic, culture and work discipline are in forming stage and all the processes should be formed from the beginning.

If you had a choice, which one would you choose?

252 RESPONSES

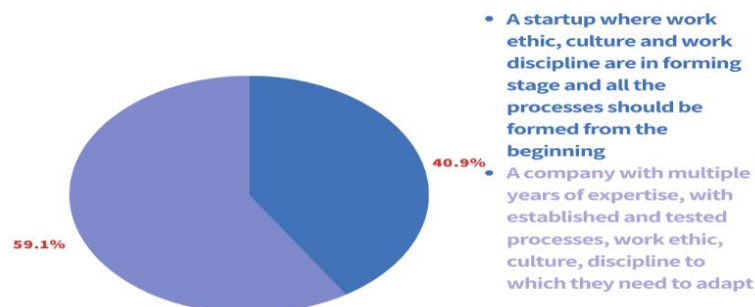


Diagram №6

In scope of the research, respondents were asked to appraise significance of reimbursement while searching for new job (where 1 means not important and 5 – very important). Among interviewed individuals, 49.6% thinks reimbursement is the most significant factor, 4.8% of respondents chose neutral assessment (3 points) and only 0.8% think it is not important.

The last question was related with their perception of ideal work environment (which associations were related with ideal working environment). According to the answers, 80.6% of respondents think that professional development fully reflects their vision of ideal work environment. Other associations reflecting vision towards ideal work environment were: justice – according to 79% of respondents; competitive reimbursement (75.4%); trust (73.8%) and good atmosphere (73.8%). (Table #1)

	Do not describe at all	Not describe	Neutral	Describe	Describe a lot
Satisfaction	1.2%	3.6%	6.3%	26.6%	62.3%
Pride	6.7%	9.9%	27.8%	29%	26.6%
Responsibility	1.2%	2.7%	8.3%	27.4%	60.31%
Recognition	2.7%	3.7%	11.1%	34%	48%
Respect	1.2%	3.6%	3.1%	25%	67.5%
Trust	0.8%	3.6%	3.6%	18.25%	73.8%
Doing something different	2.4%	3.1%	15.5%	33%	46%
Professional development	1.2%	2.7%	2.7%	12.7%	80.6%
Good atmosphere	0.8%	3.7%	2.3%	19%	73.8%
Teamwork	1.6%	3.7%	8.7%	21%	65%
Innovation	1.9%	3.1%	8%	30.6%	56.3%
Transparency	1.9%	3.7%	11.1%	25.8%	57%
Justice	1.2%	2.7%	2%	15%	79%
Competitive reimbursement	1.6%	2.4%	2.7%	18%	75.4%

Table 1: Which of the following best describes your vision of an ideal work environment?

IV. DISCUSSION

Analysis of literature and research findings, both indicate that significance of employer branding is increasing in Georgia. Especially, in case of information and communication technology talents. There is a consensus between reviewed literature and results of the research. More specifically, employer branding and its strategies have real impact on information and communication technology talents.

As demographic characteristics of respondents illustrate millennials and generation “Z” prevails among technology talents, as it can be seen in the literature. According to the fact that retention of tech and IT talents is one of the most important challenges, we attempted to reveal what is average frequency of changing jobs for them. As it shows, surveyed 108 talents changed job once in last two years, 35 changed two times, whereas, 90 respondents didn’t change job in last two year’s period. We can assume, that even though talent migration from company to company happens actively, alarming indicator is not presented.

Furthermore, research question was answered on the basis of qualitative and quantitative research findings. Which components of employer’s brand have impact on information and communication technology sphere talents’ interest towards organizations? According to the results of quantitative research, information and communication technology talents prefer online platforms, such as LinkedIn and employment web portals, during job search. Among substantial top three search channels, friends are also included. On the other hand, employment agencies and career portals of universities are not significant sources while searching for a new job. This means that companies

need to develop communication channels using online platforms. Moreover, organizations should consider implementing referral programs to attract more talents based on their employees’ recommendations. Companies can grow their employer reputation on a labor market and attract potential candidates if they will offer appropriate communication about their unique and positive aspects, relevant employer value proposition in digital space.

Furthermore, if companies want to attract new generation employees, they should consider instruments on which tech and IT talents rely while searching for information. In scope of the research, it was revealed that the most reliable factor impacting talents’ interest towards employer are people working in an organization currently. The second most significant instrument is participation in events organized by the company and lastly, social media. As it shows, tech and IT talents give least priority to electronic email while looking for information about companies. According to the results of survey, it can be said that companies need to invest in Employee Value Proposition (EVP). Findings of in-depth interviews also demonstrate, that the best practices in branding for the companies is employee “voice” and their appraisals. Companies should “listen” and reflect on attitudes of employees. They can consider to implement company ambassador programs, more actively. Turning their employees into brand ambassadors will provide opportunities for companies to get closer to these talents and to capture their attention in easiest ways. As research demonstrated this is the main means to recruit talents. Parallely, it is emphasized in scientific literature that creating strategies focused on potential employees, as if

being the most important clients, produces strong EVP, which in turn strengthens employer's brand further (10).

According to the research, among all the other significant aspects the three most important factors for IT and tech talents in organization are: career development, good management and relationships with team members. This means that they are oriented on development, recognize relationships in the team, prefer to learn rapidly and are inclined to career advancement.

Probably the most interesting questions is - based on which motives do talents evaluate different employers in highly competitive business environment? As results of the survey illustrate, job offers from two different companies are assessed according to financial benefit and newest work technologies (Tools, Frameworks, Libraries). The third and fourth significant factors are company reputation and brand. Consequently, it can be assumed that information and communication technology talents, while choosing vacancy, pay attention to various components of employer's brand, including reputation. In addition, the majority of surveyed individuals chose hybrid working format. This indicates that with increasing importance of employer brand the freedom of choice is crucial for this generation, which is reflected in free working format. If companies want to motivate talents, they shouldn't restrict by working in office only and need to offer various alternatives.

In a survey, several questions concerned financial profit with a purpose to evaluate whether this is the most important factor for talents or not. One of the questions directly emphasized financial side as a major factor while searching new job. Approximately 50% of respondents indicated that reimbursement is the most important (44% assigned 4 points out of 5 to this factor).

According to the results of the research, the majority of surveyed tech and IT talents prefer to work with different employers on various products/projects, periodically. It can be supposed, that they are not satisfied by routine work and continuously search for novelties. This in turn is very profitable for companies with regard to innovation and creativity value creation. On the other hand, they choose companies with multiple years' expertise, with determined and tested processes, work ethic, culture, work discipline. This indicates that company reputation and employer's brand is substantial for talents.

Research results confirm that vision related to ideal work environment for tech and IT talents, first of all, is associated with professional development, justice and competitive reimbursement. Consequently, it can be said that employers should review benefits system frequently. On the one hand, they need to satisfy basic requirement-reimbursement and review it often to stay competitive. On the other hand, they need to direct resources on employee development, fair reimbursement systems and creation of healthy and comfortable work environment.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the results, we can conclude that employer brand is a concept gaining substantial meaning in business world. This is especially true in scope of recruitment and retention of information and communication technology talents.

Nowadays, companies are working with new generation talents. Consequently, they need to learn adapting to this reality to gain competitive advantage. Modern businesses should recognize that their employees' motivation and behavior have changed. However, social-economical factors are still significant and should be considered always. Moreover, with integration of human resources', marketing and management strategies organizations will have diversified competitive brand.

Overall, on the basis of conducted research the main determining factors for employer brand can be defined. These factors are – financial benefits, transparency and openness, professional development, flexible working format and continuous efforts to maintain employee happiness and wellbeing. Above-mentioned factors are crucially important for appropriate positioning and brand effectiveness in information and communication sphere talents.

To conclude, information and communication technology talents create new reality on labor market, which leads companies to diversify and modernize organizational culture. Employer branding strategies challenge traditional employee selection and retention models and offer innovative systems tailored on new, digital audience.

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She is a healthcare and management specialist, business coach, with 18 years' experience in management, in insurance and healthcare sectors. Throughout her career, Nino occupied senior level positions in Georgia's biggest insurance companies and chains of clinics. Nino is an invited lecturer, expert and thesis supervisor in several universities in Georgia. She teaches bachelor and master program students, Organizational Behavior, Essentials of Management and Insurance and Risk Management. Nino is a medical doctor. She holds Master's degree in business administration and PhD in Public health. Her dissertation topic was – “Georgia's Prospects in Medical Tourism: Barriers and Challenges in Healthcare Sector”. Her research fields are- E-health, digital technologies in healthcare; medical tourism. Nino has completed global health course in Tromso University, Norway. Following her passion about healthcare quality and patient safety, Nino completed lean management course at Kaizen Institute Georgia. Embracing the core values of professional development, innovation, integrity and personal growth, Nino is actively participating in various workshops and conferences abroad. She is MASHAV program Alumni. In the role of principal researcher, Nino has worked on several research projects. She has published several articles in scientific journals.

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She is a Human Resources Manager, with 5 years' experience in the Hospitality, Fintech and IT/Tech sectors. Throughout her career, Irine occupied different positions in Georgian and international companies. She has a progressive experience in Talent Acquisition (Technical Engineering and Non-Technical), Employer Branding, Hiring & Onboarding, Applicant Tracking Systems, Recruiting Analytics, Developing strategic recruitment and sourcing plans, Negotiation, Process improvement, Performance Management, Skilled at building relationships with employees across all levels of an organization. Irine holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in business administration. Her Master topic was – “The Role of Employer Branding in Attracting and Retaining Information and Technology Talents: The Case of Georgia”. Her research fields are- Human Resources, Employer Branding, Tech and IT talents. Embracing the core values of professional development, innovation, integrity and personal growth, Irine is actively participating in various workshops and conferences.