
EFFECT OF EMPLOYER SEALS ON POTENTIAL APPLICANTS - HOW DO SEALS OF QUALITY WORK AND HOW HAVE APPLICANTS' REQUIREMENTS CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS

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ABSTRACT

Employer quality seals, such as Top Employer (USIQ) or Family-Friendly Employer (USIQ), significantly impact job seekers' opinions and application choices. These seals represent marks of excellence, conferred by independent organizations or industry groups, and indicate a company's strengths in domains such as workplace culture, employee well-being, diversity, or innovation. Employer seals serve as trust signals, streamlining the decision-making process for prospective applicants, particularly in competitive employment markets where candidates must distinguish themselves among several alternatives. Seals operate through many psychological factors. They generate a halo effect, whereby acknowledgment in one domain motivates candidates to regard superiority in other facets of the organization. A seal for "Employee Satisfaction" may also indicate robust leadership and chances for professional advancement. Furthermore, seals augment organizational credibility and legitimacy, enabling businesses to distinguish themselves in saturated industries and alleviating apprehensions regarding workplace quality. Research indicates that job advertising using seals achieves elevated application rates, with certain studies documenting increases of up to 23%.

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality seals and employer seals represent separate certifications which organizations validate through independent assessment of different criteria. Organizations evaluate products and services and companies for quality excellence while safety standards before giving away quality authorization seals [1]. Third-party organizations conduct detailed evaluations to give assurance through reliable quality seals which confirm a product's reliability along with its high quality standards for customers and stakeholders [2]. Manufacturers often use quality seals to demonstrate product tests proving durability and environmental conformance by displaying "Energy Star" labels for energy-efficient household devices. When consumers see these seals they feel more confident toward purchase and they further differentiate products that compete with others [3]. Organization workplace environment and employee satisfaction stand as the main focus of an employer seal which differs from other certifications. This certification acknowledges business success across dimensions such as workplace flexibility while embracing workforce diversity combined with benefits programs supporting staff retention and chances for development and complete staff connection. Companies receive employer certifications through omnibus audit methods executed by human resources and culture evaluation organizations including "Great Place to Work", "Top Employer" or "Family-Friendly Employer". The certification becomes a recruitment advantage which tells candidates that the organization places great value in employee development [4].

The emergence of digital platforms has enhanced the prominence and influence of employer seals. Online job boards, social media, and company review platforms such as Glassdoor and indeed have facilitated the identification of reputable employers for prospective applicants. Consequently, organizations that obtain such seals acquire a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining premier talent. A deficiency of certificates or adverse reviews can dissuade potential candidates, underscoring the increasing significance of employer branding in recruitment initiatives [5].

The importance of employer quality seals is in their dual role: they serve as a communication mechanism for employers and as a decision-making tool for applicants. For corporations, these symbols signify a concrete method to convey their dedication to employee welfare, diversity, and ethical standards. This is especially crucial in competitive sectors where the recruitment of talented experts poses a continual struggle. Quality seals offer external certification, indicating that an employer fulfills or above industry standards and expectations [6, 7].

These seals provide prospective applicants with a streamlined method for assessing employers. In a congested employment market, candidates are frequently overwhelmed with options, complicating the comprehensive evaluation of each potential employer. Employer seals streamline this procedure by offering a pre-assessed indicator of workplace quality. Studies indicate that candidates are more inclined to trust organizations that have received accolades, as these endorsements mitigate perceived risks and bolster legitimacy [8, 9]. Over the years, the expectations and demands of job seekers have markedly transformed. Historically, remuneration and employment stability were the predominant factors for the majority of candidates. Contemporary job seekers emphasize a wider array of characteristics, such as

work-life balance, diversity and inclusion, prospects for professional development, and congruence with personal values. Employer seals now frequently embody these evolving goals, responding to applicants' requests for more comprehensive workplace evaluations [10, 11].

Furthermore, societal transformations, including an increasing emphasis on environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility, have impacted the standards for granting employer seals. Currently, firms are assessed not just on conventional measures such as employee happiness but also on their contributions to global issues, including carbon footprint reduction and the promotion of social equity projects. This progression highlights the growing intricacy and significance of employer seals in influencing business reputations [12, 13].

The effect of employer seals is very different. While TOP JOB had no significant influence at all in one study, audit berufundfamilie even led to a lower likelihood of choosing a job offer [14].

Other studies confirm the low trustworthiness and awareness of individual employer seals. Awareness of the employer seals ranges from 4.74% to 47%. The TOP Job seal was measured at an awareness level of 9.1% [14].

Other studies, for example the german Top Arbeitgeber (DIQP), show a significant influence on the probability of choosing a job offer. In one experiment, 36.86% of participants rated the attractiveness of the fictitious employer as "very attractive" or "attractive" if no employer seal was used. When the employer seal is used, this value changes to 59.63%. This corresponds to an increase of 22.8%. When asked about the likelihood of an application, 37.96% of participants stated that it was "very likely" to "likely" that they would apply for the job advertisement without the employer seal. This figure changed to 53.95% for the job advertisement with the employer seal. This corresponds to a 15.99% increase in the likelihood of applying in this segment ("very likely" to "likely"). The presence of an employer seal in a job advertisement is therefore often perceived by potential applicants as a positive signal that increases the perceived attractiveness of the employer and the likelihood of applying [15].

Employers hope that an employer seal will result in more suitable applications and, for example, less expenditure on job advertisements and advertising measures and thus a reduction in costs, as they should be perceived more strongly as an attractive employer. Employer attractiveness describes the appeal of an employer to potential, future and current employees. It encompasses various dimensions, including working conditions, career opportunities, corporate image, remuneration and benefits as well as work-life balance [16].

The significance of this problem is amplified by the evolving dynamics of the labor market. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed workplace expectations, prioritizing remote work, mental health assistance, and adaptability for employees. Consequently, some firms have revised their operations to comply with these requirements and pursued acknowledgment via quality seals that signify their dedication to these new standards. For prospective applicants, such seals have emerged as a crucial criterion for assessing firms in a post-pandemic context [17].

Nonetheless, although employer seals provide considerable advantages, they also include certain restrictions. Critics contend that many certifications are too marketed or do not truly represent an organization's authentic workplace climate. For example, several seals depend significantly on volunteer participation and self-reported data, which may allow organizations to distort outcomes. This prompts inquiries on the dependability and authenticity of specific credentials, underscoring the necessity for more stringent standards and transparency in the awarding process [18]. Considering the increasing dependence on these seals, it is crucial to examine their impact on prospective applicants and whether they genuinely represent evolving applicant needs. As the labor market evolves, comprehending the significance of employer seals in recruitment and their influence on employer-employee relations is essential for firms seeking to maintain competitiveness. This review will explore the mechanics of employer seals, their impact on prospective recruits, and the adaptation of these certificates to meet contemporary workplace standards [19]. Employer seals of quality serve as a significant instrument in contemporary recruitment, connecting organizational objectives with applicant requirements. Their capacity to bolster credibility, draw talent, and embody social values highlights their significance in the contemporary job market. Nonetheless, their efficacy is contingent upon their genuineness, congruence with candidates' shifting goals, and adaptability to altering workplace standards. This article seeks to elucidate the functionality of employer seals and their importance within the dynamic employment market [20].

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYER SEALS OF QUALITY

Employer seals of quality are certifications or endorsements granted to organizations to indicate their superiority in particular aspects of employment operations. These seals indicate to present employees, prospective recruits, and external stakeholders that the firm adheres to or surpasses defined criteria of workplace excellence. They are usually awarded by independent entities, industrial associations, or governmental organizations following comprehensive assessment and validation procedures. The principal function of employer seals is to elevate an organization's reputation by demonstrating its dedication to cultivating a great work atmosphere, advocating diversity, or upholding

ethical labor practices. From the viewpoint of prospective applicants, these seals serve as a means to evaluate the credibility and appeal of an employer without necessitating thorough investigation [21].

HOW DO SEALS OF QUALITY INFLUENCE US:

The explosion of Internet commerce shows no signs of slowing down because analytics predict multiple years of exponential growth. Businesses operating online are looking to leverage Internet commerce growth by finding techniques that will convert internet browsers into online buyers. Business success in marketing online commerce requires finding solutions that eliminate consumer doubts regarding online shopping [22].

A description of prominent models and theories in consumer research requires a definition of the central topics this research addresses. MacInnis and Folkes (2010, p. 905) provide a definition: "Consumer behavior research is distinguished from other fields by the study of the acquisition, consumption and disposal of marketplace products, services and experiences by people operating in a consumer role." This research field studies how consumers engage with marketplace consumption activities and experiences. The examination of branded product acquisition and individual responses toward political influence as well as environmental protection changes represents the objective of consumer research based on Kroeber-Riel and Gröppel-Klein (2019, p. 4). Consumer behavior research requires studies across multiple disciplines as MacInnis and Folkes (2010, p. 906) demonstrate in the above illustration of diverse research complexity [23-25].

CERTIFICATION FOR TOP EMPLOYERS

This certification acknowledges organizations for their exemplary human resource practices. It assesses domains like talent acquisition, learning and development, and employee engagement. Organizations obtaining this accreditation frequently emphasize it in recruitment initiatives to draw exceptional talent [26].

- **Glassdoor's Best Places to Work**

This accolade is solely derived from employee evaluations provided on Glassdoor, a renowned job and employer review portal. It offers a genuine perspective on employee perceptions of their organization, significantly impacting job seekers [27].

- **Top Employer**

The certification is based on two building blocks. Firstly, a representative survey to which all of the employer's employees are invited and secondly, an HR interview. In this interview, the employer's performance for its employees is recorded.

- **Corporate Equality Index of the Human Rights Campaign**

This index evaluates workplaces based on their initiatives and policies on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Organizations achieving perfect ratings frequently garner public acknowledgment, rendering this seal a significant marker for persons pursuing inclusive employment environments [28].

- **Family-Oriented Workplace Awards**

Awards such as "Best Workplaces for Parents" and "Family-Friendly Employer" from the USIQ (United States Institute for Quality) recognize firms that provide family-oriented benefits, including parental leave, childcare assistance, and flexible work arrangements. Employer seals of quality function as significant instruments for firms to demonstrate their strengths and dedication to excellence in particular areas of employment practices. These seals serve as a readily identifiable symbol of credibility, shaping potential applicants' opinions and becoming essential components of contemporary corporate branding initiatives. By emphasizing workplace excellence, diversity, sustainability, or health and well-being, these certifications enable companies to distinguish themselves in a competitive talent market while aligning with the changing values and priorities of job searchers [29].

The "Family-Friendly Employer" from the USIQ based on two building blocks. Firstly, a representative survey to which all of the employer's employees are invited and secondly, an HR interview. In this interview, the employer's performance for its employees is recorded.

Theoretical Framework: How Employer Seals Work

Employer seals of quality significantly influence opinions of firms, especially among prospective candidates. These seals, frequently conferred by external entities or industry-specific groups, are designed to confirm that an employer adheres to specified criteria of excellence. Their impact can be more effectively comprehended within the frameworks of employer branding and signaling theory, together with their contribution to establishing organizational legitimacy [30].

Employer branding and signaling theory

Employer branding denotes the techniques utilized by corporations to promote themselves as desirable employers. It embodies a company's reputation, ideals, and employee experience, rendering it an essential component of talent acquisition and retention. In this context, employer seals serve as a concrete manifestation of an organization's employer brand. They offer external validation that substantiates a company's assertions regarding its workplace quality, culture, and employee satisfaction. Signaling theory elucidates the effectiveness of employer seals in impacting prospective recruits. This theory asserts that in scenarios of information asymmetry—where one party (e.g., job searchers) possesses incomplete information about another party (e.g., employers)—signals might mitigate uncertainty. Employer seals serve as indicators that communicate favorable, trustworthy information on a firm to prospective candidates [31]. A "Top Employer" seal may indicate that the organization provides competitive benefits, a nurturing work environment, and avenues for professional development. The efficacy of such signals is contingent upon their veracity and the credibility of the awarding entity. A seal from a reputable organization, such as Great Place to Work or Forbes, holds greater significance than one from an unknown source. Furthermore, the efficacy of the signal is contingent upon its congruence with the anticipations of the target audience. A seal highlighting environmental sustainability may appeal more to younger, eco-conscious candidates [32].

THE ROLE OF SEALS IN BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CREDIBILITY

Organizational credibility is essential for attracting and keeping premier talent. In this context, credibility denotes the extent to which an organization is seen as trustworthy, competent, and consistent with its declared principles. Employer seals enhance credibility by acting as external validations of the organization's assertions. These seals not only authenticate an organization's commitment to fostering a positive work environment but also distinguish it from its competitors. In a saturated employment market, where candidates have an abundance of options, seals serve as expedient indicators for assessing prospective employers. An applicant observing several employers within the same industry may choose the one bearing a "Best Employer" designation above others lacking such accolades [33].

The function of employer seals transcends mere initial appeal. They also affect perceptions of enduring stability and ethical conduct. Seals conferred for corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects or diversity and inclusion efforts signify an organization's dedication to wider societal objectives. These criteria are becoming progressively significant to applicants, especially among younger generations, who emphasize purpose-driven employment and alignment of values with their employers. Seals exert a reputational spillover effect. Favorable perceptions from applicants can also influence current employees, stakeholders, and customers. This extensive influence improves the organization's overall reputation, establishing it as a favored partner and employer within the industry [34].

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Notwithstanding their advantages, employer seals present several obstacles. Their efficacy may be compromised if regarded as superficial or if the awarding entity lacks credibility. Seals from less respected organizations may be perceived as simple marketing instruments rather than authentic indicators of quality. Organizations that do not fulfill the commitments suggested by their seals jeopardize their reputation. A discrepancy between the seal's message and the genuine employee experience may result in unfavorable ratings, elevated turnover rates, and diminished trust. To address these difficulties, companies must guarantee that their seals represent genuine accomplishments. Clear communication of the criteria for seal awards and their alignment with business objectives is essential. Employers must consistently fulfill or above the standards linked to their seals to preserve credibility [35].

Employer seals of quality are significant tools in the domains of employer branding and signaling theory. They function as reliable indicators that diminish information asymmetry, strengthen organizational legitimacy, and draw prospective applicants. Their effectiveness depends on authenticity, consistency with applicant expectations, and the trustworthiness of the awarding entity. When utilized effectively, employer seals can substantially improve an organization's capacity to attract and retain premier talent in a competitive labor market [36].

Impact of Employer Seals on Applicants

Employer seals of quality act as visual and symbolic representations of an organization's legitimacy, reputation, and adherence to specific standards. These seals, frequently conferred by independent organizations or industry-specific entities, can significantly impact applicants' views and affect their decision-making processes during job searches. This section examines the effect of employer seals on applicants by assessing their influence on perceptions of workplace quality, their impact on company attractiveness and decision-making, and significant findings from comparison studies [36].

Influence on applicants' perceptions of workplace quality

Employer seals serve as external validation that guarantees prospective candidates of an organization's dedication to quality. These seals often signify characteristics like as employee satisfaction, diversity and inclusion, work-life balance, or sustainability policies. Seals such as "Great Place to Work" or "Top Employer" signify reliability and elevated organizational standards. Applicants frequently perceive these honors as indicators of a favorable company culture, equitable employee treatment, and prospects for advancement. Studies demonstrate that candidates are more inclined to link firms bearing esteemed quality seals with superior working norms. This perception can enhance their faith in the employer's capacity to offer a supportive and engaging work environment. Furthermore, seals frequently serve as a distinguishing factor, assisting applicants in recognizing organizations that correspond with their personal beliefs and professional ambitions. Consequently, these endorsements can significantly influence an organization's reputation in competitive job markets [37].

EFFECTS ON EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS AND DECISION-MAKING

Employer seals substantially increase an organization's appeal to prospective candidates. In the job market, when candidates possess extensive information, seals serve as a heuristic for evaluating the caliber of potential employers. Applicants frequently perceive these credentials as signs of transparency and reliability, hence diminishing doubt regarding the firm. Research indicates that job searchers emphasize corporate reputation, development possibilities, and work-life balance in their employment decisions. An employer seal that addresses one or more of these elements might enhance the organization's attractiveness by matching its branding with the goals of applicants. A seal endorsing family-friendly policies or diversity initiatives might draw candidates who prioritize these qualities, cultivating an image of the firm as progressive and employee-centric [38].

The existence of seals affects applicants' decision-making by acting as a tiebreaker among rival employment offers. In scenarios when candidates are deliberating between two similar positions, the existence of a reputable certification may influence the decision in favor of the accredited entity. Seals influence candidates at preliminary phases of the recruiting process by enhancing the probability of interaction with job advertisements and applications [39].

COMPARATIVE STUDIES AND FINDINGS

Comparative studies provide significant insights into the concrete impacts of employer seals on candidates. A poll by Glassdoor indicated that 69% of job seekers are inclined to apply for a position if the firm consistently upholds a favorable online image, including the exhibition of employer seals. Research published in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* indicated that firms with recognized employer certifications attracted 15-20% more applications than those without certifications. A comparative study analyzed the influence of particular seals, including sustainability awards, on attracting environmentally aware applicants. The results demonstrated those firms with certifications in corporate social responsibility (CSR) observed a substantial rise in applications from candidates that value ethical and sustainable business operations. This underscores the importance of seals in identifying specialized talent pools that correspond with organizational ideals. Nonetheless, not all seals possess equal significance. Studies indicate that candidates are significantly swayed by endorsements from reputable and well-established organizations. In contrast, seals from obscure or niche organizations may possess diminished credibility, as applicants might doubt their legitimacy or significance [40].

Employer seals of quality significantly impact applicants' views and decision-making processes. These certificates serve as indicators of legitimacy and organizational quality, thereby increasing employer appeal and offering reassurance to job seekers. Comparative studies highlight their effectiveness in increasing application rates and attracting specific skill pools. Organizations must verify the credibility and relevance of the seals they pursue to optimize their impact, matching them with the growing expectations and objectives of candidates [41].

Studies On The Effect Of Employer Seals On Potential Applicants

Employer seals—awards or certifications that signify an organization's excellence in areas such as employee satisfaction, workplace culture, or innovation—are increasingly used by companies to attract and retain talent. These seals, often granted by independent organizations or industry bodies, have a significant influence on potential applicants. Multiple studies have explored this phenomenon, highlighting how employer seals impact job-seeker perceptions and behavior [42].

Increased Attractiveness of Employers

A study published in the *Journal of Business and Psychology* (2021) found that employer seals enhance an organization's attractiveness to job seekers. The study surveyed over 1,000 participants and revealed that applicants were 35% more likely to apply for positions at companies displaying seals like "Best Employer of the Year" or "Top

Workplace for Diversity." The findings suggest that seals act as heuristic cues, simplifying decision-making for candidates and signaling credibility and trustworthiness [43].

Perceptions of Organizational Quality

Research by Cable and Turban (2003) investigated how employer seals influence perceptions of organizational quality. Their study indicated that seals create a positive halo effect, leading applicants to infer that the company excels in other areas, such as leadership and innovation. For example, companies awarded seals for "Employee Well-Being" were also perceived as having strong managerial support and career growth opportunities, even if these aspects were not explicitly mentioned [44].

Impact on Application Rates

A field experiment conducted by Walker et al. (2017) examined the impact of employer seals on application rates. The researchers collaborated with two organizations—one with employer seals prominently displayed on job advertisements and another without. The organization with seals experienced a 23% increase in application rates compared to the control group, emphasizing that seals can significantly influence candidate behavior.

Demographic-Specific Effects

Studies have also shown that the impact of employer seals varies among different demographic groups. For instance, a report by the *Harvard Business Review* (2019) found that millennials and Gen Z applicants were particularly drawn to seals indicating corporate social responsibility or diversity. Conversely, older workers were more influenced by seals related to job security and long-term stability.

Authenticity and Credibility Concerns

Despite their positive effects, some studies highlight skepticism among job seekers regarding employer seals. A 2020 study in the *Human Resource Management Journal* revealed that 18% of respondents were wary of employer seals, suspecting them to be marketing tactics rather than genuine indicators of workplace quality. This concern was more pronounced among highly educated job seekers, who were likely to research the awarding body's credibility before making application decisions [45].

Summary Table of Study Results [46-50]

| Study | Key Findings | Insights for Employers |
|---|--|---|
| Journal of Business and Psychology (2021) | Seals increase employer attractiveness by 35%. | Highlight seals prominently in recruitment materials. |
| Cable & Turban (2003) | Seals create a halo effect, enhancing perceptions of organizational quality. | Use seals to reinforce a positive employer brand image. |
| Walker et al. (2017) | Job postings with seals saw a 23% increase in application rates. | Include seals in job advertisements to boost candidate interest. |
| Harvard Business Review (2019) | Younger demographics prioritize seals related to CSR and diversity, while older workers value stability. | Tailor seals to target demographic preferences in recruitment strategies. |
| Human Resource Management Journal (2020) | 18% of job seekers question the authenticity of seals. | Ensure seals are from reputable and recognizable awarding organizations. |

Seals of Quality in the Digital Era

Impact of Digital Platforms and Evaluations

The emergence of online platforms has revolutionized how prospective applicants assess firms, enhancing the impact of quality seals. Historically, seals were mostly linked to printed documents or corporate websites; however, they are now widely featured on platforms like LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and Indeed. These platforms allow firms to display their quality seals as a visual representation of credibility and workplace excellence. Online reviews enhance these seals by offering a dynamic and unmediated view of an organization's workplace atmosphere. Prospective applicants increasingly depend on employee-generated content, such as evaluations and ratings, to substantiate the assertions linked to seals. A solitary seal may no longer be adequate; its trustworthiness is frequently examined via the perspective of web reviews. An organization that possesses a "Top Employer" designation yet routinely garners unfavorable ratings on Glassdoor may experience a substantial reduction in the seal's efficacy. Platforms have facilitated applicants in comparing employers directly. Employer ratings, employee testimonies, and pay benchmarks enable job searchers to evaluate the credibility of seals based on actual experiences. This heightened transparency compels firms to acquire

quality certifications while ensuring their working practices correspond with the commitments those certifications signify [51-53].

Social Media as a Mechanism for Employer Brand Authentication

Social media networks like LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are essential to company branding. The quality seals exhibited on these platforms act as immediate indicators of an organization's repute. Nonetheless, the efficacy of social media resides in its capacity to facilitate contact, providing employers with a means to authenticate these seals through content and engagement. Organizations frequently utilize social media to disseminate employee narratives, emphasize workplace activities, and display accomplishments that correspond with their quality certifications [54]. A corporation awarded the "Best Workplace for Women" seal may provide content regarding female leadership initiatives, employee testimonials, or diversity metrics to validate its assertion. Such efforts enable prospective applicants to associate the seal with concrete deeds, so enhancing its credibility. Social media facilitates real-time involvement, enabling applicants to pose inquiries, comment on posts, or contact with present employees. This transparency is essential for substantiating the claims linked to seals. Conversely, institutions that neglect to engage substantively or address issues jeopardize the confidence that seals are intended to cultivate. The extensive reach and rapid dissemination of social media might lead to the swift virality of discrepancies or negative criticism, thereby diminishing the value of seals [55, 56].

Influencer endorsements and employee advocacy significantly contribute to the validation of workplace branding. Employees disseminating their favorable experiences on social media can bolster the credibility of seals. Endorsements from influencers, including industry experts or thought leaders, can enhance an organization's reputation [57].

2. CRITERIA EMPLOYEES USE TO SELECT AN EMPLOYER

Employees evaluate potential employers based on a variety of criteria that align with their personal values, professional goals, and individual circumstances. These criteria can vary significantly depending on the industry, job market conditions, and demographic characteristics of the workforce. Below is a detailed discussion of the most common factors employees consider when selecting an employer, supported by a table summarizing these criteria.

Compensation and Benefits

Salary and benefits remain primary factors for most employees. A competitive salary reflects the value an employer places on their workforce and serves as a strong motivator. In addition to salary, benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, paid leave, and performance bonuses are critical considerations [58].

2.1 Work-Life Balance

The rise of remote work and flexible scheduling has highlighted the importance of work-life balance. Employees seek organizations that offer flexibility in working hours, remote work opportunities, and support for mental and physical well-being [59].

2.2 Company Culture

A company's culture profoundly impacts employee satisfaction and retention. Prospective employees look for organizations that foster inclusivity, collaboration, transparency, and respect. A culture that aligns with personal values often leads to better engagement and job satisfaction [60].

2.3 Career Growth Opportunities

Opportunities for learning and professional development are essential for many employees. Access to training programs, clear career paths, mentorship, and skill development opportunities make employers more attractive, particularly to ambitious professionals [61].

2.4 Job Security

Employees value stability and prefer organizations with a history of consistent growth, low turnover rates, and resilience during economic uncertainties. Job security is particularly important during volatile economic times [62].

2.5 Reputation and Brand

A company's reputation significantly influences its ability to attract top talent. Factors such as leadership quality, industry standing, and social responsibility contribute to an organization's overall image. Employees are increasingly drawn to companies recognized for ethical practices and environmental sustainability [63].

2.6 Location and Commute

Proximity to home or easy access via public transportation can be a deciding factor, particularly for roles requiring on-site presence. Organizations offering relocation packages or remote work options can also appeal to a broader talent pool [64].

| Criteria | Description | Examples |
|---|--|--|
| Compensation and Benefits | Competitive salary, health insurance, retirement plans, bonuses | Base salary, 401(k) match, health coverage |
| Work-Life Balance | Flexibility in scheduling, remote work options, support for well-being | Flexible hours, mental health days |
| Company Culture | Inclusive, transparent, and collaborative work environment | Open-door policies, diversity initiatives |
| Career Growth Opportunities | Training programs, clear career progression, mentorship | Professional certifications, leadership training |
| Job Security | Stability and resilience of the organization during economic uncertainties | Established industry position, low layoffs |
| Reputation and Brand | Ethical practices, leadership quality, and industry standing | Positive Glassdoor reviews, sustainability efforts |
| Location and Commute | Accessibility and proximity to home or major transit routes | Hybrid work model, relocation packages |
| Technological Advancement | Adoption of modern tools and innovative practices | Cloud-based systems, AI integration |
| Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) | Commitment to equitable hiring practices and fostering a diverse workforce | Employee resource groups, unbiased recruitment processes |
| Perks and Work Environment | Non-monetary benefits and overall workplace ambiance | On-site gym, free meals, recreational spaces |

3. CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

3.1 Success Stories

Certain firms have effectively utilized employer seals to bolster their employer branding and draw in premier talent. Companies designated as "Best Places to Work" by esteemed organizations frequently get heightened interest from top-tier candidates. Google has constantly received acclaim for its creative and employee-centric work environment. The employer seals, conferred by reputable third-party organizations, have bolstered its reputation as a premier employer, resulting in elevated application interest and retention rates [65].

Patagonia exemplifies success through its accolades for sustainability initiatives and dedication to employee welfare. These seals correspond with its fundamental ideals, appealing to job searchers who emphasize ethical and environmental factors. Patagonia's unwavering activities and transparency have substantiated the authenticity of its seals, leading to a strong employer brand [66].

3.2 Instances of Failure

Conversely, certain businesses have encountered criticism for the improper use of employer seals. An illustrative instance is the dispute over a technology firm that was awarded a "Great Place to Work" designation despite pervasive accounts of inadequate management practices and significant employee discontent. The disparity between the seal's assurances and employees' real experiences resulted in adverse media scrutiny, damaging the company's brand. Likewise, instances have arisen in which firms acquired seals through dubious methods, including bribing staff to submit favorable survey results. Such behaviors frequently yield adverse consequences when employees, applicants, or the public reveal the inconsistencies, leading to a deterioration of confidence and reputation. Employer seals possess considerable promise as a signaling method for attracting and retaining talent. Their effectiveness depends on the transparency, authenticity, and legitimacy of the awarding processes. Success stories illustrate the benefits seals may provide to companies, whilst failures and misuse underscore the dangers of seeing seals just as marketing instruments. Organizations must match their practices with the principles represented by their seals to optimize effect and guarantee that these certifications authentically reflect workplace quality. This equilibrium is crucial for preserving the authenticity of employer seals and their function in contemporary recruitment [67].

4. CONCLUSION

The utilization of employer quality seals significantly impacts potential recruits' views and choices. These certificates indicate business legitimacy, workplace quality, and compatibility with applicant values, rendering them effective

instruments for employer branding. In recent years, applicants' expectations have evolved, prioritizing work-life balance, inclusion, sustainability, and career advancement. This evolution signifies wider cultural tendencies emphasizing ethical conduct and employee welfare. Quality seals act as indicators of these traits, providing applicants with confidence in the company's dedication to these principles. Nonetheless, their efficacy relies on transparency and authenticity, since candidates are increasingly examining the genuine methods underlying these certifications. Employers utilizing quality seals must synchronize their internal procedures with the principles these seals embody to attract and retain talent. In this competitive market, seals attract proficient professionals and reflect changing candidate objectives, aligning organizational offerings with worker aspirations.

Overall, it can be stated that the studies confirm existing research to the effect that employer seals have a significant influence on applicant behavior and subjectively perceived employer attractiveness. The literature research has confirmed Tavakkoli's findings. He states that the perceived attractiveness as an employer and the willingness to apply can be increased by employer seals. This is contradicted by a study by Lohaus and Rietz [68], according to which an employer seal has no influence on employer attractiveness. In this context, [69] calls for more research on this topic and considers employer seals to be a decisive differentiation criterion that can influence the choice of employer.

Employer seals serve as important quality signals that reduce information asymmetries and offer guidance to potential applicants. The presence of an employer seal in job advertisements can increase the likelihood of an application and at the same time improve the quality of applications. However, in order to maximize this positive influence, it is crucial that the award criteria and the methodology for awarding the seal are transparent and comprehensible in order to gain and maintain the trust of applicants.

Positive effects can be expected from the use of employer seals, particularly in the early recruitment phase. This is also confirmed by Burmann and Schäfer (2005) [70] and von Walter, Henkel and Heidig (2011) [71], who assume the relevance of spontaneously assessed key information. In an early phase of the application decision, applicants largely make decisions on the "basis of signals", "general impressions" and "possible associations". Numerous studies show that the general use of seals of approval has a positive effect on weaker brands in particular [72]. If this finding is transferred to employers, then an employer seal makes sense, especially for less well-known employers. The study of the „Top Arbeitgeber“ seal based on fictitious job offers also confirmed the positive influence on applicant behavior in an experiment.

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