

Charu

Hello and welcome to Mrigashira Bhaskar. Congratulations for continuously inspiring us with award winning work and on today's episode, we hope to learn a lot more about some of your campaigns.

Bhaskar

Thanks, thanks a lot, and I am happy to be here.

Charu

I'm going to step back and ask you, when you move to Egis, which is a b2b company, what were your top most challenges?

Bhaskar

So actually, it's multiple, you know, as you said, First, it's a b2b company that too in engineering consulting space, I mean, even though the brand is involved in more than say, eight, nine metros, three airports, boards, dams, and multiple other infrastructure projects. But still, as a brand, it's not known beyond the industry. I mean, when I say industry, it's it's more of the engineering space and even in engineering is more of consulting. Right. So in engineering, and we may have heard of L&T, elanco, and other companies, but but Egis, as a company, which is more than two consulting space was not very much well known and when you have to work for a brand, which has to be, you know, highlight in front of stakeholders or created some kind of evidence about your work. And the channels are very limited, because the 100% of our clients are government clients. So there is always this issue of you being able to talk about a particular project or not. So multiple issues that there but within three months, I was been able to, you know, manage it well. Starting from India website to social media presence, to increase visibility in media, along with other key stakeholders, I think I think COVID has actually helped in a way of, you know, creating the visibility because social media was was a key component of, you know, making the brand visible. So, are not such challenges, but yes, as you said, b2b company has its own issues.

Charu

No, of course, and I think the best thing is about code COVID is that there's always an opportunity and that has helped the b2b companies specifically transition towards the power of social power of digital and looking at new ways and new solutions. Typically, for a consumer centric brand or business, the dynamics are always different when it comes to attracting talent, what does it take to create a strong employer brand for a B2B company?

Bhaskar

Say again you know, I think it has changed a pre COVID area arena , it was completely different and post COVID or during COVID Arena, it's completely different. Nowadays, I think the young talent specially very engineering company. So we 80% of our work strength is engineers and they are below the age of 35 their requirements are very different and in a post COVID era or or during COVID era also the key factors which which matters for new talent to come and join a company like us was flexibility at work, work life balance, kind of job security, when I say not only job citizens kind of security, creative work and most importantly you know, international exposure. So, you are a French company almost

present in 100 companies and there is always this, possibility of Indian employees working for you know, international projects, especially, recently we have we have opened up a small unit which is which is kind of a design center and, and Generally, the design center work is mostly with the work which is ongoing abroad, not the Indian book. So, I think international exposure is something which is which is very much required for engineers to look for a new brand. And I think social media helped us a lot in that because whenever you're doing any creative work, it was easy for us to, talk to our audience, especially the prospective employees to you know, communicate and to tell what kind of work we are doing and how we are different from, the other competitors.

Charu:

So, here you have talked about that their needs are different say younger people but you know, when it comes to communicating about your employer brand to external world to attract this talent, what kind of approach works best? some people prefer bold and authentic they like sharing what really like to work at the company. What exactly are the candidates really looking for these days?

Bhaskar

So during COVID time, you know, it was very important to engage with internal audience as well as external audience. When I say internal audience, it's mostly to do with employees and when I say external audience, it can be any of the stakeholders, especially the budding engineers, or budding employers who are looking for job I think the critical part for any brand is to communicate, the flexibility at work, work life balance, the kind of security you give to your employees is is very much important. Like Case in point you know, I've seen you know, a lot of companies were started you know, online yoga, or virtual, you know, challenges which I think in a way is a very good way to you know, engage with not only with the employees also with their family, and I think days are gone when when people used to go for big brands Now, now, people are more inclined to go to brand which actually thinks for them things for their family, and stands for their family. So when I say security, it's not only job security, this kind of all kinds of security is you know, there are families there are employees who have aged parents at home they have in laws at home and, insecurity about their health insecurity of, not getting medicine on time or not getting you know, proper medical facility on time is also so critical. As I said, mental health has become a key thing for every company. And I think it's very much important for every brand who's trying to communicate with all stakeholders, especially with internal and external employees, these are key things one should keep in their mind.

Charu

You've explored multiple digital and offline channels to ensure that the engineering teams and stuff of Egis spread across the country they stay connected and engaged tell us more about how you have integrated digital in your communication campaigns for employees?

Bhaskar

So pre verified initial stages were actually joined the company and lockdown was yet to happen most of the engagement used to happen one to one or people is to visit site offices where we are we have got almost 3000 employees nationally and our corporate office has got only 300 people and almost 27

to 200 people are in a scattered in various site offices, it can be in Bombay, it can be Pune or it can be remote areas in our industrial also and it became very, very important that you know, you engage with your employees because most of their employees are actually you know, staying away from home and during lockdown or during COVID time this is insecure thought of how my family is or how I'm going to you know, cope up with work also not being able to go to office on a regular basis as earlier as we used to do or has given an extreme lot of you know, complications. So, we thought of, you know, engaging them on a regular basis in a consistent way. And along with HR we devise a lot of you know, activities and because of COVID and as COVID has been a fast forwarded the digital transformation, digital way of connecting was the only way which was possible because there were restrictions on travel and there are multiple restrictions. So we devised a umbrella campaign and under that campaign, there are multiple things one of the campaign I can talk about, we thought you know, how to encourage people to take up you know, physical activity. So, we started a small activity and in WhatsApp groups, we started giving some kind of challenges to the employees and it can be running it can be walking, it can be cycling, and we started one group and staff also. So initial stages of last room I went first two weeks, the attendance was not very encouraging from the employee side, but slowly, I mean, after one month, does something around 1000 people who participated, so I think, somewhere I mean, every brand has to engage with their employees and and give that kind of feeling that we are also there for you.

Bhaskar

So I'll give you two examples. One was this, you know, walking, running and other physical activities, which he tried to do. Second was multiple small breakup campaigns, like, you know, virtual yoga, and I'll give you one example, one of my colleague, he was regularly in the yoga session, but he was not very much, you know, involved in yoga. So I asked him, he said, you know, the only reason I'm connecting yoga session is is to, you know, see the faces of my other colleagues, which I have not been able to see in last six months of time. Now, that was something which was it was, you know, very touching, then one guy said, you know, that, you know, can my family members, my parents, my wife, they can also join a yoga session. Now, then we understood that by these sessions, you're not only connecting the employees, you actually contribute a larger audience, with the family also. Right. So that was one activity, then there was a, you know, painting competition for kids. So there were multiple ways to engage not only that particular employee, also each and every member of his family, like starting from kids, to his wife, to the employees, maybe even parents, so we tied up with a few few institutions, I'll not name them. And these institutions were like, you know, giving some kind of facilities to people were worth 60 plus, you know, doctor on call, or medicine to be sent at home. Now, maybe these are very small things. But for the employee who has got his aged parents or in laws staying with him, it eases lot of his tension. Right. And that security for life or security for the well being of his family members increases. So multiple things about we try it touching up all the family members, so that, you know, there is a positive environment and, and less of, you know, insecurity at home.

Charu

Companies engaging with their employees can that have a large difference on the success or the failure of the company?

Bhaskar

Of course, see, I mean, the, you always need happy employees to work for the brand, you know, if the employee start feeling that it's just a job, and it's a nine to five job, maybe the creative way of working may or may not, you know, arise. So it's always good to have happy employees who feel good to be associated with the brand and not only the employee, their family members also think positive things about that particular brand and that is that is going to be key in in days to come. Because, you know, it's not only about one particular employee, it's about their family also and the close connect with the family helps a lot to ease out a lot of tensions at their end, as well as the brands and also, and as I as I said, that, you know, during COVID time, there is another very important thing that, you know, teamwork has given reason to a lot of creativity. As I said, you know, creativity is, you know, the best way out of any kind of prices, and one can be creative only when he's happy about working on a particular project or any particular brand.

Charu

So you've talked about programs, using digital internally, to bond employees out what about programs or digital programs, or you could do to attract talent, extra communicating externally using digital to attract talent?

Bhaskar

So there are multiple things we have done, we have, we have run certain campaigns, I'm not going to elaborate of them. It's more of how creative you are, how challenging your work can be and and people can come and participate, especially the budding engineers can, can come and participate and we had a, we had an internal jury who is going to you know, evaluate their kind of work so these kind of smaller things can actually help people to know about your brand and also about the kinds of projects you're doing, or the kind of work you're going on. Because you know, apart from a certain section of of, you know, people who are going to join for a particular brand that other people may not know much about the brand. So that's I think the best way to you know, be vocal and and talk about your brand is one way to engage with the external audience who you think will be probable you know, employees for your company and also to create subcommittees inside the company and have brand champions who already working with Egis, so maybe may be someone from the engineering team can talk about his experience or his creativity which he has done in in his work, and that may be something which can be, you know, inspiring from people who can, you know, take the lead and come and join that particular brand. I think it has to be two ways one external audience for for external audience, there has to be certain campaigns to engage with them. Also you have to create brand champions inside who can be vocal, who can actually advocate about your brand.

Charu

Right. So, just last question in three words describe a well crafted strategy for a strong employer brand.

Bhaskar

I think, again, it has changed flexibility, Authenticity, clarity, and trust, are, I think the three key pillars for any company to you know, to work for either internal audience or for the external audience. So, we have to be, you know, flexible patient and understanding with all stakeholders, especially with employees, and somehow, you know, the communication should be more transparent, empathetic, proactive, and, and it has to be consistent because kind of, you know, engagement once in a quarter is

not going to work. It has to be almost on a weekly basis, unless you're consistent on your messaging and you are saying that as a brand, we are with you. It's very difficult to create a no positive environment.

Charu

Agree with you completely and thank you so much for sharing, you know, some of your experiences with us and I'm sure there's a lot of people will benefit out of them.

Bhaskar

Thanks a lot, Charu and I'm happy to be here. Thanks.