



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

PUBLIC SECTOR BRANDING

An internal brand management perspective

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract

The increased use of branding within the public sector signifies an important area for academic research that currently lacks theory and empirical evidence; public sector branding. Extant literature paints a scattered picture. On one hand, some branding principles appear to be equally relevant in the public sector as they are in the private sphere. On the other hand, the public sector appears to require a somewhat distinct approach to branding as there are contextual differences that may affect branding principles, their implementation, and outcomes. Thus, the field lacks established relevant theoretical frameworks to guide public sector organizations in their branding efforts.

One particular area of interest is that of internal brand management. A strong organizational brand is dependent on the brand values being incorporated into the fabric of an organization and into the behaviors of its employees. How this outcome can be achieved in the public sector, however, is still unknown. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate central factors that affect the implementation of internal brand management in the public sector, considering its specific nature.

Through a multi-method study, this dissertation presents the synthesized findings of four individual papers. The first paper, a literature review, explores extant research on public sector branding. The next two papers are based on a qualitative case study, which includes interviews, observations, and brand-related documents. The fourth paper is based on a quantitative study. The three empirical papers investigate various factors that influence internal brand management in the public sector.

The synthesized findings demonstrate that organizations within the public sector need to approach branding in a manner that considers its distinct nature. From an internal brand management perspective this entails considering contextual, organizational, and individual factors. These factors have been found to affect branding principles and their implementation in public organizations and indicate the unique nature of public sector branding.

Keywords

Public sector branding, internal brand management, internal branding, organizational branding, brand commitment, brand architecture, internal communication, organizational practices, public service motivation

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