


# Chapter 1


## A Preliminary Study on Ethics and Sustainability in Hospitality Employer Branding

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### ABSTRACT

*Tourism is currently one of the main sectors of profit for the worldwide economy. The new segments of ethical and sustainable tourists increasingly seek to obtain unique and sustainable experiences during their trip and stay, thus creating a greater connection with the destination, acquiring cultural and personal enrichment, and thus having a greener consumption. This pre-liminary research aims to explore ethics and sustainability in employer branding applied in the hotel industry, in which it is intended to correlate these very current and little explored themes. From an interdisciplinary perspective, the chapter presents insights for tourism marketing and organizational management (i.e. ethics and employer branding). Findings and practical implications for management are presented.*

### INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector faces global challenges in attracting and retaining talent, for several reasons, such as: unskilled labour; high turnover rate; excessive working hours; high competition and low pay (Santos, Sousa, Costa & Au-Yong-Oliveira, 2021; Santos et al., 2023). Therefore, it is very important

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not only to attract the right talent, but to be able to motivate and involve current employees, so that they have no interest in leaving the organisation, for this reason, it is necessary to find tools that can solve these problems in the hotel sector as high difficulty in hiring (Baum & Hai, 2019). The new segments of ethical and sustainable tourists increasingly seek to obtain unique and sustainable experiences during their trip and stay, thus creating a greater connection with the destination (Laitamaki, Hechavarría, Tada, Liu, Setyady, Vatcharasontorn & Zheng, 2016), acquiring cultural and personal enrichment, and thus having a greener consumption (Fennell, & Bowyer, 2019). Ethical and sustainable tourists travel in a more ecological way, love to discover destinations and their identities, know, and respect their cultures, customs, and local communities, use the resources available by the environment without compromising future generations, preserving local traditions and natural resources (Veloso, Walter, Sousa, Au-Yong-Oliveira, Santos & Valeri, 2021). Therefore, hotel organisations have begun to think about reviewing their strategies, so that they can meet the needs and demands of new market segments and contribute to more sustainable tourism, through more sustainable and responsible management with Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) policies (Ribeiro & Gavronski, 2021), obtaining an employer brand with a more positive and sustained image, thus attracting and winning the most talented (Sullivan, 2009), with sustainability being a relevant factor in organisational strategic planning (Cvelbar & Dwyer, 2013).

The aim of this chapter is to understand the relationship between ethics and corporate social responsibility and EB strategy communication in retaining and attracting talent in the hospitality industry. More specifically, this research intends to explore the role of HRM practices in conjunction with the EB strategy in terms of attraction and retention being implemented by the hotel industry, to inform hospitality industry organisations about what advantages they can achieve by improving their reputation and image, by getting a good EB strategy and by being socially and environmentally responsible, and finally to confirm the existence of a link between business ethics and environmental sustainability.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Regarding the theme of ethics and sustainability in employer branding applied in the hotel industry, we intend to analyse the main definitions of the following concepts of employer branding, ethics, and sustainability, according to their evolution over time and based on the hotel industry, to understand the complexity of each of the concepts. Due to globalisation and the fact that the world is constantly evolving, consumers in the tourism and hospitality sector, are increasingly demanding, and this quickly results in gradually shortening product and service life cycles and processes, it is necessary to obtain more innovative and creative strategies to exceed consumer expectations and desires (Lansing & Vries, 2007; Wang, 2014; Molina-Collado, Santos-Vijande, Gómez-Rico & Madera, 2022; Santos et al., 2023). The concept of employer branding consists of a tool capable of making employees aware of the advantages of belonging to the organization, fostering a sense of pride, and supporting talent retention. Continuous promotion of a strong employer brand attracts, motivates, and retains the best talents, ensuring an elevated level of continuous performance (Patra, Mukhopadhyay, Dash, 2019; Santos et al., 2023). It is important that the image and reputation, through the organization's employer branding, attract employees with high potential, offering a set of distinct benefits within the workplace (Pittz, Benson, Intindola, Kalargiros, 2017). It is easier to maintain good human resources practices by complementing them with employer branding strategy, thus continuing to implement new initiatives that create value

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