CSR and its potential in Employer Branding
An Analysis of Preferences of German Graduates

Silke Bustamante
Klaus Brenninger
Berlin School of Economics and Law
Silke.bustamante@hwr-berlin.de

Due to an increasing bottleneck on major labour markets in developed countries, Employer Branding has gained momentum over the past years. At the same time, Western societies and as such employers experienced a major paradigm shift: The demand for a socially, ecologically, as well as economically responsible behaviour of society and its members, for companies known as CSR. CSR might be a powerful way to successfully positioning the employer on the labour market. Before this background, the objective of this paper is to evaluate the significance of CSR from a future employees´ perspective, and as such, its potential role in Employer Branding. The theoretical framework will rely on sociological, psychological and economic (signaling) literature (e.g. Ashforth& Mael, 1989; Dutton et. al., 1994, Spence, 1974; Rynes, 1991), which will be combined with literature on employer attractiveness and branding (e.g. Grobe, 2008, Petkovic, 2008). Based on theoretical insights, a survey amongst 679 German students was conducted in order to check the actual relevance of workplace and general CSR for potential employees preferences and attitudes towards companies. The results partly confirmed the assumptions made in the theoretical part:

Over 90% of all respondents consider some aspects of workplace CSR as important or very important. Nearly 30% include selected workplace CSR characteristics even in their top 3 criteria when it comes to employer selection. General CSR, however, seems to have minor importance for employer choice in Germany. When evaluating the spread in importance ratings of workplace CSR aspects within different identifies sub-segments, the sample proved major differences in preferences for CSR related job attributes.

Literature:
- Ashforth, Blake E. & Mael, F., Social Identity Theory and the Organization, The Academy of Management Review, 14 (1), 20-39.

- Dutton, J. E., Duckerich, J. M. & and Harquail., C. V.(1994), Organizational images and member identification, Administrative Science Quarterly 39 (2), 239-263.

- Grobe, E. (2008), Employer Branding – Verhaltenstheoretische Analyse als Grundlage für die identitätsorientierte Führung von Arbeitgebermarken, Leipzig

- Petkovic, Mladen (2008), Employer Branding – Ein markenpolitischer Ansatz zur Schaffung von Präferenzen bei der Arbeitgeberwahl, München.

- Spence, A. M. (1974), *Market Signaling: Informational Transfer in Hiring and Related Screening Processes*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Blackwell, Oxford, U.K.

- Rynes, S. L., Bretz, R. D. & Gerhardt, B. (1991), The importance of Recruiting in Job Choice: A different way of looking Personnel Psychology, 44, 487–521.