

Leveraging Employer Branding and Social Responsibility in HR Practices for SMEs: Insights from the ReCrew Project

Valerij Dermol

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
valerij.dermol@mfdps.si

Aleš Trunk

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
ales.trunk@mfdps.si

Diana Medrea-Mogensen

We Are Entrepreneurs ApS, Denmark
diana@weareentrepreneurs.dk

Abstract

The ReCrew project, a collaborative endeavour among experts across various European countries, embarked on an explorative journey to redefine resource allocation within Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by integrating employer branding, social responsibility, and HR practices. This study aims to identify effective HR practices amidst the evolving dynamics of the workplace, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to establish a bridge between theoretical insights and practical applications within SMEs. Employing a mixed-method approach, the research involved desk research, interviews with HR professionals, consultants, and entrepreneurs, and a qualitative survey across six countries. A notable outcome is the identification of best practices and the compilation of 12 case studies illustrating successful implementation of integrated HR strategies that prioritize social responsibility, employer branding, and the well-being of employees. Findings reveal a positive disposition towards diverse HR practices, highlighting a gap in sourcing and attracting candidates and underlining the significance of building a positive company culture aligned with employer brand values. The study also uncovers geographical differences in HR practices and employer branding strategies, indicating the pivotal role of digital technology in recruiting. This research contributes to the knowledge of resourcing in SMEs, providing a framework for integrating employer branding and social responsibility into HR practices to enhance organizational competitiveness and employee satisfaction.

Keywords: HR practices, employer branding, social responsibility, Erasmus+, ReCrew Project