



## **Branded Lives: Identity and Work in the Era of the Brand**

### Track Chair

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The growth of emotional, aesthetic and identity work within organizational contexts has, some argue, led to changes in the way that people are managed at work. It has been suggested, for example, that people are increasingly encouraged to bring more of 'themselves' into the workplace but the question of what constitutes appropriate selves, and how this is formulated remains open to question. One possible response has been the development of employee branding wherein organizational processes encourage employees to buy into symbolic representations of organizational values (Miles and Mangold, 2004). Crucially, through symbolic display and performance employees are induced to represent the brand image within the workplace and beyond.

We welcome theoretically informed empirical research that documents the ways in which employees are constituted as portraits of organisational 'brands'. Outline themes and issues include, but are not limited to: the relationship between employee branding and organisational culture; the role of formal HRM and employee branding; issues of control, resistance and accommodation to employee branding; notions of consumer sovereignty, emotional labour and employee-brand relations.

We wish also to critically examine the various aspects of 'living the brand' and employees' 'branded lives' from both organisational and employee's perspectives. From the organisational point of view, contributions could explore how organizations attempt to build brands through employee relations and HRM initiatives, but also, more informally, through the nurturing of specific organizational and shop-floor cultures. From the employee's perspective, we wish to explore employee experiences, interpretations and subversions of these initiatives. In particular, employees' lived conflicts and contradictions in constructing their identities as part of the brand. We also welcome contributions that specifically explore ways in which the brands are communicated externally to the customer (including 'through' employees).