

**Evaluation of a successful recruitment process of senior
managers in central government agencies of Finland**

Case: Central government agencies of Finland

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<p>The Ministry of Finance of Finland published a guide on how to successfully recruit senior managers for ministries or government agencies in December 2013. The guide presents the recruitment process of senior managers step by step. Its aim is to help government employees who are in charge of recruitment and to standardize the recruitment process, since it is not clear how much this process actually corresponds to the above-mentioned guide.</p> <p>The main objective of this thesis was to study the recruitment processes of central government agencies of Finland and see what the similarities and differences are between these processes and the model recruitment process introduced by the Ministry of Finance. The studied government agencies are Tekes (the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation), Tulli (Finnish Customs), Väestörekisterikeskus (the Finnish Population Register Center), Trafi (the Finnish Transport Safety Agency) and Evira (the Finnish Food Safety Authority). Another objective was to describe how to best succeed in the recruitment process based on general theory, the publication by the Ministry of Finance and a number of interviews carried out.</p> <p>The study of the recruitment process was made by using qualitative methods. The most important method was carrying out interviews. The interviews were with government agency employees on the human resources decision-making level. These interviews took place from January to March 2014 using semi-structured interview questions. Another research method was to study appointment memoranda, which are public memos from the recruitment process in which the whole recruitment process is described. These memoranda provide an explanation as to why a particular applicant was chosen for a given position.</p> <p>The outcome of the research indicated that all the studied central government agencies have a similar recruitment process when compared to the ideal recruitment process model, as described by the Ministry of Finance. Briefly stated, successful recruitment means connecting with a candidate who is able to accomplish the objectives of the position and who needs what the recruitment organization has to offer. The successful recruitment process includes several points. The most important one, according to the publication by the Ministry of Finance and the interviews, is to make meticulous preparations. Recruitment is a strategic process; the overall strategy must therefore be set first.</p>	
<p>Keywords: recruitment, human resources, recruitment process, senior management</p>	

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1 Introduction of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to study and analyse the recruitment process of executive and senior management in (selected) central government agencies in Finland. How to make the recruitment process successful and choose the right candidate for a position?

There are twelve ministries in Finland; Prime Minister's office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Environment. Altogether, the ministries employ approximately 4200 employees in total. The ministries prepare issues that fall within the scope of the Finnish Government. Each ministry has their own mandate which is specified in the Government Rules of Procedure.

There are approximately one hundred of central government agencies and public bodies in Finland which operate under the responsibility of ministries. There are approximately 84000 employees (of which approximately 4500 employees work in ministries) in the State Administration (suomi.fi).

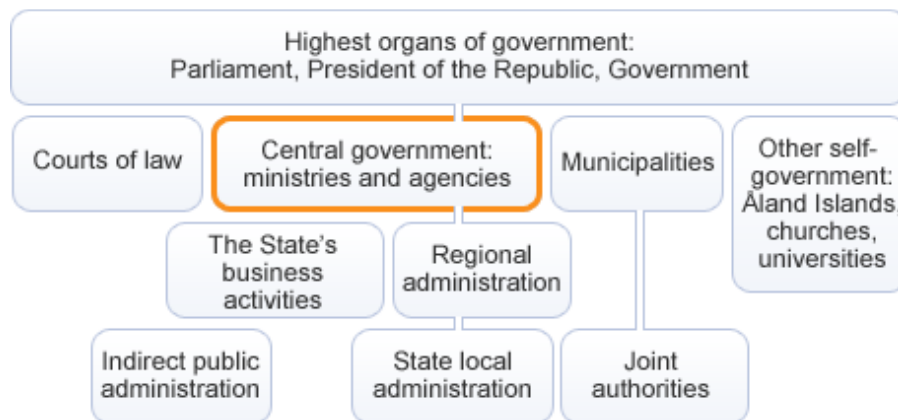


Chart 1. Position of central government ministries and agencies in the structure of the public administration (www.suomi.fi).

Joblessness or difficulty of getting a job is a very current topic nowadays. For example, young graduates seem to have difficulties in getting a job.

Everyone	2012/7	2013/7	Change, quantity	Change, %
Bachelor's degree	17 556	21 463	3 907	22,3
Master's degree	17 569	21 268	3 699	21,1
Doctorate degree	1 095	1 294	199	18,2
Others	215 473	243 121	27 648	12,8
Total	261 746	299 976	38 230	14,6

Recent graduates	2012/7	2013/7	Change, quantity	Change, %
Bachelor's degree	1825	2271	446	24,4
Master's degree	1850	2201	351	19,0
Doctorate degree	70	92	22	31,4
Others	10 045	12 392	2 347	23,4
Total	14 151	17 232	3 081	21,8

Table 1. Amount of jobless people without layoffs (Akava 2013).

As seen from the table, there are many people without work. Since the recession, there are fewer and fewer open positions every year. This results in huge amounts of people applying for different positions and therefore, there can be huge amounts of applications to one single job. Since there are a high demand for jobs but a low supply, it is interesting to know (at least for the writer of this thesis) who is the one to get the job from hundreds of perhaps thousands of other applicants.

The writer of this thesis has always wanted to know more about recruitment and selection process. What should be done in order to have better chances in getting hired? How can one stand out from the crowd? What kind of process is recruitment?

The writer did her work placement in the Communications department of Prime Minister's office in autumn 2012. Among daily work routines, one objective was to discuss a topic for a bachelor's thesis. After having contacted with the HR department of Prime Minister's office, topic "recruitment" was suggested. The HR department directed the writer of this thesis to Ministry of Finance who would have more expertise on recruitment matters.

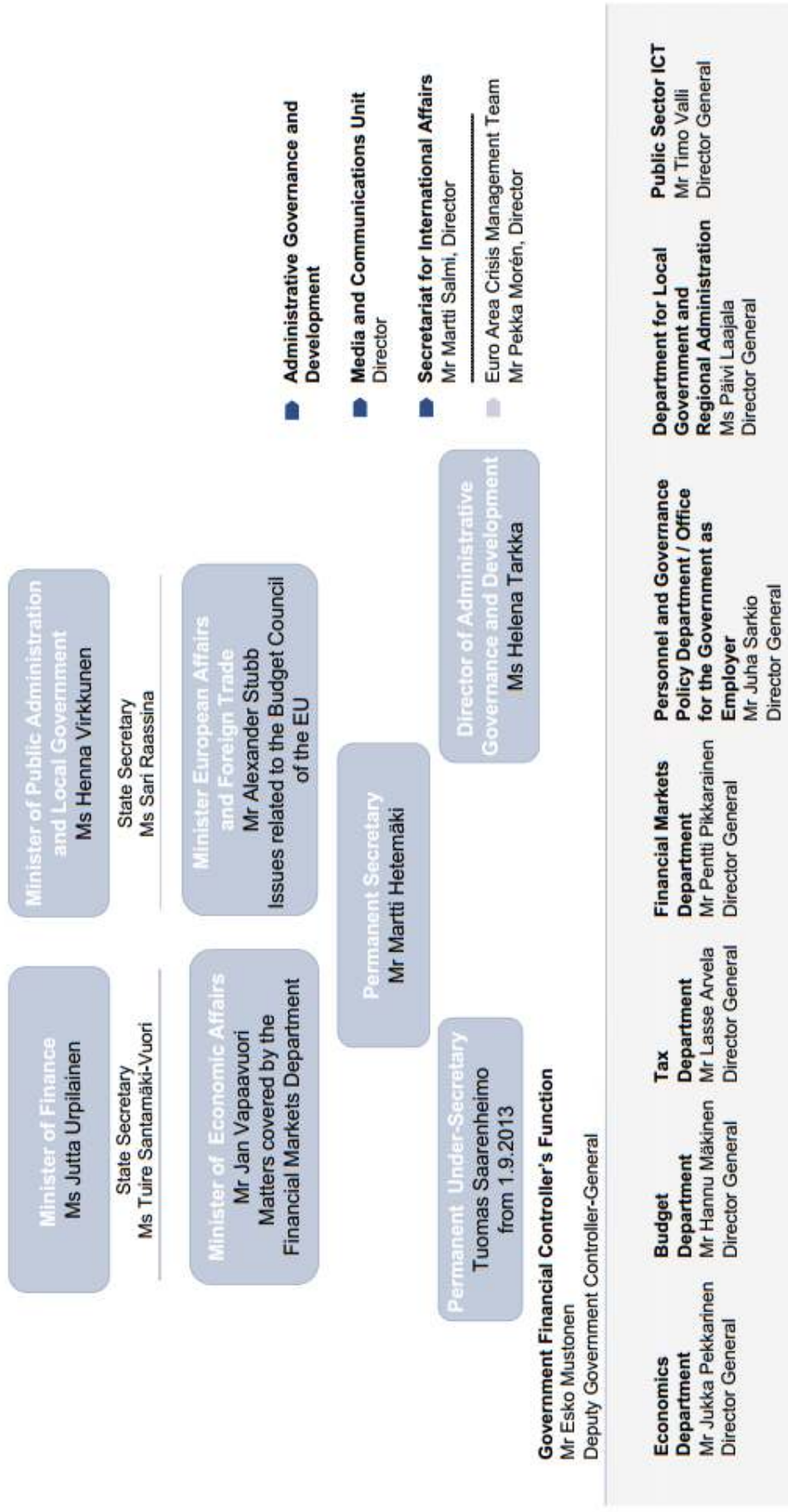
1.2 Ministry of Finance as the main commissioning party

The commissioning party for this thesis is the Ministry of Finance which is part of the Government (valtioneuvosto in Finnish). Their main objectives are to prepare the annual budget, set a fiscal and macroeconomic framework and to offer experience in tax policy matters. The ministry has also other important responsibilities without the financial aspect; the overall development of Government and be responsible for personnel policy and as a State Employer. All in all, the Ministry of finance has a lot of power and influence in the Finnish society.

Currently, the ministry is led by the Minister of Finance, Ms Jutta Urpilainen. There is also other minister, Minister of Public Administration and Local Governance, Ms Henna Virkkunen, working mainly on municipal and regional matters.

The commissioning party department in the Ministry of Finance is the Personnel and Governance Policy Department/Office for the Government as Employer. The department is divided into four units: Collective Agreements, Personnel Policy, Research Services and Governance Policy and Public Services unit. The department's main responsibilities are employer and personnel policy in central government and to promote competitiveness of central government as an employer. The Director General of the Personnel and Governance Policy Department is Mr Juha Sarkio

Chart 2. The organisational chart of the Ministry of Finance.



1.3 Thesis objectives

There is certain recruitment process model introduced by the Ministry of Finance and it is unknown if central government agencies follow the ideal recruitment process model similarly. In addition, ministries and central government agencies are under different organisational changes and recruitment of senior managers is an important area of development so therefore, the central government agencies should be studied more closely. A study of 5 different government agencies is aimed for research.

This thesis has the following research objectives:

- What kind of process is recruitment in the ministries and government agencies of Finland?
- How to make the recruitment process successful and make sure to choose the right candidate?

As it is unknown if the central government agencies follow the ideal recruitment process model introduced by the Ministry of Finance, the hypothesis of the research that the studied government agencies will differ from the ideal model. The differences are expected to be small though because government guidelines are quite similar, for example.

Successful recruitment can be difficult to define. Briefly stated, successful recruitment means connecting with a candidate who is able to accomplish the objectives of the position and who needs what the recruitment organization has to offer (Williams, E. 2000).

Successful recruitment includes several points. Recruitment is not only technical; recruitment requires professional skills (Markkanen, M. 1999, 17). Successful recruitment is described in the following chapters. The interviewed central government agencies were also asked how to make the recruitment process successful and make sure to choose the right candidate from the interviewees' perspectives. The results for question can be found in chapter 5.4.

2 Principles of recruitment

When a person decides to leave from a company, for any reason, it is often time to evaluate if someone else in the company can replace the person who has left or is it time to find a new employee. Recruitment is always a process in a company; whether the process is relatively fast (1-2 days) or very lengthy (more than three months), the process follows certain guidelines set by a company.

Recruitment is usually the task of the human resources department (in medium or large companies) or of an individual person (often in small companies or in start-ups). Recruitment can also be outsourced to executive search firms, “headhunters” or to employment agencies. Recruitment is shortly explained as certain processes in an organization which are accomplished to find a person to a job position.

Recruitment can be executed internally or externally. Internal recruitment is usually not considered recruitment at all; it is more seen as a promotion or as a career rotation (Vaahtio, E-L. 2007, 13). Internal recruitment is a good option when there is a need for a fast recruitment. External recruitment takes more time because there are more requirements in the process than in internal recruitment.

Recruitment can be internal and external at the same time. In this case the current employees of a company can apply for a job but also other applicants from outside of the company are seen as capable as the current company employees. In other words, the company considers the current employee and the new applicant equal. The current employee has of course some benefits in recruitment; knowledge of the company, the career development helps in engaging the employee in to the organization and the know-how does not exit the company but the know-how develops. But internal applicant is not necessarily the best choice, it is important that the applicant is applicable; suitable for the job (Aho, T. 2012)

2.1 Recruitment is a process

Recruitment is seen as a process. A usual recruitment process can be explained shortly with the following key points:

- Analysing the existing resources and noticing the need
- Task analysis and definition of tasks and selection criteria
- Job advertisement
- Interviews
- Choosing the right candidate
- Announcing about the decision

The above mentioned key points are usual in recruitment for almost every company. The difference is in the details and in other guidelines but of course it depends on a company.

2.1.1 Analysing the existing resources

Before even starting the recruitment process, it is important to think if there is a true need for a new employee or is it possible to compensate the tasks of the leaving employee in some other way (Österberg, M. 2009, 80). A company should always think that what if the work tasks could be divided in such a way that current employees would not have too many responsibilities or is it time to reorganise and improve the work methods. When an employee decides to leave a company there is an excellent chance to analyse the future of the company; how will the current work community function in the future? Is it necessary to find a new employee with the exact same qualifications as the previous employee?

The company should always remember the current resources, the employees. For example, an employee within the company might have improved the needed skills to take place of the previous employee. This career shift brings many advantages and disadvantages. First, career shift or job rotation is cost-effective and fast and employees have more possibilities to develop themselves. But on the other hand, the job rotations might not bring any new ideas to the company and there is a possibility that the work atmosphere turns more negative, envious.

Often there is not too much time for analysing the company future; the new employee must be found in just a couple of weeks, for example. The current tendency in an

organisation is to be too busy; there is not enough time for formative and analytical tasks in a busy work schedule (Koivisto, K. 2004, 32). The misconception is to think that recruitment is nothing more than posting a job advertisement, selecting potential employees, interviewing and making the final decision. In addition, recruitment is seen more as a basic routine and not as a significant task. According to Koivisto, recruitment is not the time for rapid decisions; the process must be set up carefully.

As stated by Brown, J (2011, 63), “if recruitment is not a priority for your business and it has low impact on the business when roles are not filled, this may be less important. But for any business that has talent at the top of its agenda, placing recruitment in the hands of experts who love their job or empowering managers to do it well will bring best results.”

2.1.2 Task analysis and setting selection criteria

When there is a need for a new employee, the work tasks should be identified. What will be the primary tasks now and in the future? What are the demands? What are the best ways to get the tasks done?

The purpose of the task analysis is an important structure during the whole recruitment process. Although task analysis might take a lot of time but on the other hand it saves time in other parts of the process. For example, the analysis helps in designing the job advertisement, in planning the evaluation methods and in replying to enquiries (Laine & Äijälä 2013, 10).

Next, clearer requirements for the new employee should be set. Vaahtio recommends being practical and precise; all the needs and personal requirements, criteria must be written down as a list. Although the criteria may be remembered well, writing the criteria down makes the criteria more tangible and the list will secure you from a “halo effect”.

“Halo effect means that when a candidate’s glaring performance on one sector makes the candidate’s other qualities appear overpowering. This is dangerous. For example, excellent verbal abilities make good impressions but they do not guarantee the person to have other good qualities needed in the position.”(Vaahtio 2007, 23.)

“Many interviewers fall prey to the ‘halo effect’. They wrongly believe that a candidate who has charm and good interpersonal skills will be good at everything else. But the reality is that just because someone creates a good first impression during an interview does not mean that they will be good at other skills – even other interpersonal skills – such as working in a team or serving customers.” (Yeung 2011, 4.)

According to Vaahtio, the following list will help in setting basic selection criteria:

- Job description. What should the new employee be able to accomplish right away?
- Special requirements. Does the company have certain mathematical, linguistic or technical requirements?
- Future. Does the new employee have to be prepared for traveling, for more responsibilities?
- Personal competencies. Team work? Social skills?

According to Kauhanen (2010, 76), the most common wanted personal competencies and skills are:

- team work skills
- language proficiency
- able to work under pressure
- extrovert
- flexible
- perseverance
- decision-making skills
- presentation skills

All of the above mentioned skills and competencies are of course great qualities to manage in working life. But these competencies are not necessarily the competencies which are required to succeed in a position. The essential requirements and wanted personal skills should be more separated.

Of course, it is impossible to generalise all the requirements. But education, work experience and suitable personal competencies are not enough alone; motivation is highly important as well.

2.1.3 Job advertisement

First of all, a job advertisement should be clear and correct. Clear job advertisement includes at least: job title, location, objectives, duties, terms and contact information. Job advertisement is a good way to tell about a company so there should be some basic information about the company in the advertisement. The “basic information” should of course raise the job applicant’s interest to apply but the information should also be realistic. The style of the advertisement matters too and companies can get quite creative with a job advertisement. The writing style can be formal or informal and bold colours can be used (in print), for example. The style really depends on a company. For example, young start-up companies might have an informal, approachable and creative style in a job advertisement whereas law offices could have a formal and a serious style.

Nowadays, it is possible that a job advertisement is published in numerous recruitment channels. Most common places to publish an advertisement are internet databases (employment agency website, company website, CV- banks or other similar service providers) and different newspapers and magazines. Other ways are executive search (head hunting), recruitment fair, schools, temporary work agencies and company’s own personnel (intranet). According to Kauhanen (2010, 83), the choice of a recruitment channel how much and in which way a company wants to influence in constituting the company image. As mentioned before, companies can get creative with a job advertisement but overall, the advertisement depends on the budget. The budget is usually higher when searching for a new CEO than searching for an assistant.

Kauhanen recommends considering whether to use an external recruitment consultant when searching for an executive, for example. The recruitment consultant should be an expert when it comes to recruitment and other human resources matters. A qualified consultant knows how to interview and is interested in the company in general. When to use a qualified recruitment consultant, it is up to a company but when using a consultant, the cooperation is recommended to be long-term.

In Finland, it is legally binding to provide information about open vacancies. It is mentioned in the Employment Contracts act (55/2001). Chapter 2, section 6 mentions:

The employer shall provide information on vacancies in accordance with practice generally adopted in the enterprise or at the workplace in order to ensure that part-time

and fixed-term employees have the same opportunity of applying for these jobs as permanent or full-time employees.

According to Vaahio, some companies might act unfairly by posting a job advertisement although the choice has been made. It is unfair to all the applicants that have applied for a job that already has been filled long time ago. This kind of unfairness should be avoided and all applicants should be treated equally.

2.1.4 Applications and interviews

If the job advertisement attracts many applicants, it is usually a good sign. The number of applicants shows the amount of people who are interested in the company and of course in the vacancy. But then again, a big amount of applications does not always equal quality.

If a company wishes to receive many but still 'good quality' applications, the job advertisement should be constructed as attractive and the advertisement should be widespread first of all. Secondly, the criteria should not be too high or too low. Thirdly, the company should be active. Finally, a company should also take time in recruitment; it is not really beneficial to recruit with a busy timetable.

Markkanen (2002, 36) recommends to get acquainted with the applications even though the application period has not ended yet. It saves some time when it is time to screen all the applications, for example. In addition, it is recommended not to keep the job advertisement visible for too long or not to have too long application period. If the advertisement is visible for too long or the application period is long, potential employees might think that there is something wrong in the vacancy and therefore there is a possibility that a potential applicant will not send their application.

Markkanen suggests that a good job application period is approximately 10 to 14 days.

When the application period has ended, it is time to gather all the applications. First step is to categorize all the applications. Österberg (2009, 85) suggests categorizing the applications in to three categories: applications that are definitely qualified for interview, applications that may be qualified for interview and applications that definitely do not qualify further. The idea at this stage is to look the criteria again

which were set before even starting the practical part of the recruitment process. When the criteria are well set, categorizing should be relatively easy.

One way to make categorizing easy is to make a summary of all the applicants. The summary should include all the essential information; at least work experience, (language) skills and contact information. The summary helps when making the final decision because the one who makes the final decision does not have to go through all the applications; they can concentrate on the most potential applications (Markkanen 2002, 44-45).

Table 2. Example of a summary (Vaahtio 2007, 76).

Name	Education	Work experience	Skills	Other

What is a good application that guarantees an interview? According to Österberg, a good application is usually a straight answer to the job advertisement. The appearance in the application is clear and logically structured. The application answer to questions such as which company and vacancy the application is for, in which channel the advertisement was found, why the applicant is actually applying for the position and what kind of personality the applicant has. Of course, the applicant has (almost) all the qualifications as required in the job advertisement. It really shows if an applicant has actually put effort to the application and a well-structured, logical application gives a positive image of the applicant.

Worst mistakes of an application are inconsistency, secrecy and carelessness (Markkanen 2002, 39).

Finally after carefully selecting the most potential applicants, they should be invited to an interview as soon as possible. The applicants who did not qualify to an interview

should also be notified. They should be notified because they have put their time and effort in preparing an application and sending it. Notifying the non-selected applicants impacts on the employer image positively (Österberg 2009, 86).

Interview is the most common research method. The interview examines the applicant's aptitude and gives information to the applicant about the company and vacancy (Kauhanen 2010, 83). It is not easy to generalize the best practices of an interview because they depend highly on a company. In most cases, 5-10 applicants qualify for an interview. In order the interview to be successful, it requires careful preparations. It is recommended that there should be at least two people interviewing and the same people should attend all the interviews in order being objective. The room reserved for the interviews should be quiet and all the distractions minimized. Interview can be free-form or structured. Structured interviews are often preferred because it helps in treating the applicants on the same level. Notes should be taken and school diplomas and references should be checked. A typical interview usually lasts for 1-1.5 hours.

According to Österberg (2009, 89), the interviewers should observe the interviewee on:

- Dressing and overall appearance
- Punctuality
- Handshake and eye contact
- Applicant's knowledge on the company
- Applicant's motives
- Personality, interests and goals
- If the applicant's answers are true, clear and consistent
- Questions?

From the above mentioned observations, the interviewer can determine if the applicant is suitable for the company and if the applicant is motivated.

Typical job interview questions include for example, questions about work experience, motivation, work tasks, team working skills, qualities, stress and current situation.

For example:

- Describe your previous work experience
- What kind of task you prefer or do not prefer? Why?
- Why did you decide to apply?
- What do you know about company X?
- What are your expectations regarding the open position?
- What are your goals (in 1-10 years from now)?
- What tasks seem the most or less interesting in the position?
- Describe your team working skills
- What kind of role do you have in teamwork?
- What are your best qualities?
- Which qualities you want to develop?
- Describe your most important challenge during your career; how did you manage?
- Describe situations that have caused a lot of stress to you and how did you manage in them
- Expectations? Current situation? Desired salary? Questions?

The list of questions is endless. It depends on the company what they want to measure in the applicants. A job interview is also more than just the interviewer performing questions; a job interview is a two-way interaction situation.

Vaahio (2007, 84) reminds that the interviewers are in charge of the situation, that everything goes as planned and the required information is gathered. The applicant is usually nervous of the situation even though the applicant has had several interviews before. The interviewer's duty is to decrease excess nervousness so that the applicant is given chance to reveal the best qualities. Nevertheless, the interviewer should pay attention to not being too relaxed. The interview usually starts with a small talk and after that the interviewer quite much decides where the interview proceeds. For the

interviewer, the important rules to remember are: be natural, give space, listen and keep personal opinions and comments out of the conversation.

2.1.5 Making a decision

The information acquired during a recruitment process is very vast. There can be more than ten applicants who qualify for an interview and of course, there can be a second or even third round of interviews and possibly an aptitude test. All the information (CVs, interviews, memos and discussions) should be considered for each applicant before making the final decision.

The desired competencies which were set before starting the interviews should be compared as objectively as possible with each candidate (Yeung, R. 2008, 137). Yeung (and Markkanen, M. 2002, 100) also presents an effective way to compare the candidates with each other. The first step is to rate each candidate individually how well they meet with the desired competencies and after rating all the candidates, the scores should be compared against each other.

Figure 1. Examples of rating scales (Yeung, R. 2008, 140).

1	2	3	4	5
Significant development needs	Minor development needs	Expected behaviour for someone at this level	Minor strengths	Significant strengths

7	Outstanding
6	Significant strengths
5	Some strengths
4	Competent
3	Some weaknesses
2	Significant weaknesses
1	Unacceptable

1	2	3	4	5
Considerably below par performance	Slightly below par performance	On par performance	Slightly above par performance	Considerably above par performance

Rating scales are helpful when making a decision so the rating scales should not be trusted only because decision-making it is not that simple. If two candidates seem quite equal, it is important to remember the desired competencies and decide which competencies have the most value (Markkanen 2002, 102).

The decision should be made as quickly as possible and the candidates informed. It depends on a company how the decision is announced. Brown, N (2011, 214) presents rules for rejections; how to reject candidates? The candidates who do not qualify for an interview are almost every time notified with and a non-personalized e-mail acknowledging that the candidate did not qualify further. This is not an ideal way of acknowledgement but it is still quite acceptable. New systems are being developed in which the candidate is able to track their own applications and see where they are in the recruitment process. If a candidate proceeds to a first interview but does not qualify further, it is still acceptable to send an e-mail but perhaps the e-mail should be more personalized or they should get a phone call. If a candidate proceeds to final interview but is not chosen, they should get a phone call from the company.

As mentioned before, notifying the candidates about the decision affects positively to company's employer image. Every candidate should be thanked because they did put effort and time in preparing and sending their applications. If the company does not inform the applicants about the procedure or the decision, it does not leave a very good image of the company (Österberg, M. 2009, 86).

3 Recruitment in the Government Administration

The Ministry of Finance of Finland (Valtiovarainministeriö) released a publication “Valitse oikein – opas valtionhallinnon johtajien ja asiantuntijoiden rekrytointiin” on 20 December 2013. The publication presents the recruitment process of senior management in the government administration. The process can be applied in other recruitments in the government as well but there are certain standards in recruitment of senior management so therefore the publication concentrates on them. The objective of the publication is to act as a guidebook for government recruiters. The authors of the publication are Senior Government Adviser (suom. hallitusneuvos) Ms Kirsi Äijälä from the Ministry of Finance and Senior Development Adviser (suom. kehittämisneuvos) Mr Kari Laine from the Ministry of the Interior.

The previous “recruitment guidebook” (“Miten johtaja valitaan ja valitsee – Opas valtion virkamiesten valintaan”) was published in the year 1998. There have been many changes that influenced to publish an updated publication on recruitment. In the year 2001, the Act on the Protection of Privacy in Working Life (759/2004) came into force. In the year 2007, competitive tendering of personnel evaluation was transferred to Hansel Ltd and in the year 2011, the instructions of selection criteria and designation for senior management were published.

The publication describes an ideal recruitment process. The ideal recruitment process has also been modeled into a “diamond-shaped figure” which clarifies and helps to orientate to the whole recruitment process (attachment 1).

Recruitment is very important in the Government. The recruitments must be successful because recruitment is considered as an investment for the future. The Government employees, especially the management must be qualified, committed and able to develop themselves. In addition, the recruitment of senior management, for example State Secretaries and Director Generals, are usually interesting for the media point of view.

To illustrate the recruitment process in the central government, the following chapters concentrate on different phases in recruitment of senior management more in detail using “Valitse oikein – opas valtionhallinnon johtajien ja asiantuntijoiden

rekrytointiin”(Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013) as a reference.

3.1 Preparation phase is the beginning of recruitment process

A recruitment process starts usually when an employee retires or the employee is leaving the position for some other reason. How to fulfil the tasks the previous employee was in charge of? This stage is considered as preparation phase which is a very important phase. There is no use to continue straight to practical phase of recruitment before the need for recruitment and analysis of the existing resources has been made, for example. The need for recruitment must be identified first. Second, the current resources must be measured; maybe there are existing resources which can fulfil the need. Third, the task analysis, job description and selection criteria must be set. After these phases, recruitment can proceed to the final phase of preparation phase; informing about the open position (Laine, K & Äijälä, K.2013, 11).

3.1.1 Defining existing resources and needs

When evaluating the necessity for recruitment, it is important to know the current resources; is it possible to recruit internally or is it necessary to launch external recruitment? The future must also be considered; what kind of personnel is needed in 5 to 10 years?

Evaluation is important because it is possible that the employee has served more than 20 years in the same position, for example. Therefore, the tasks can be compensated in other way than hiring a new employee. If the tasks can't be compensated, there is a strong reason for recruitment (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 12-13).

3.1.2 Task analysis is an important phase

With task analysis, the job description and the tasks can be identified; what kind of tasks there will be? What are the most important tasks now and in the future? What kind of level of expertise is needed?

Task analysis is the structure for the whole recruitment process. The task analysis usually takes a lot of time but the task analysis helps in proceeding later in the recruitment process. The analysis helps in the call for applicants, responding to inquiries, choosing and planning the evaluation methods and in preparing the appointment memorandum, for example (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 13-15).

3.1.3 Defining the job description and selection criteria

With the help of task analysis, the job description can be created. The job description must include at least the following points:

- Title and the level of qualification
- Department or unit of position
- General characteristics of the position
- Most important responsibilities and tasks
- Requirements (selection criteria)

The selection criteria must also be decided. The selection criteria include education, language skills, experience and other skills. The requirements of senior managers were renewed in the year 2011. The minimum requirements are:

- Master's degree education
- Experience in leadership
- Practical leadership skills
- Wide work experience
- Language skills (at least Finnish and Swedish)
- Other specific requirements

Experience in leadership and practical leadership skills mean different. Practical leadership skills can be gained only through in line management positions that involve leadership. Experience in leadership means that one can have leadership experience from working as a project manager for one year, for example, but the one does not obtain much practical leadership skills yet.

Practical leadership skills are very important requirement (the Ministry of Finance,

2011). Leadership skills are a broad term and they can mean (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 16-18):

- People management and structuring the workplace
- Achieving results and steering the organisation's demands
- Ability for continuous development
- Impacting the operating environment and management of change
- Greater efficiency and higher quality of processes and the supervision of operations
- General knowledge in public administration
- Basic level knowledge in EU matters

3.1.4 Announcing of the open position

The most common way to announce an open position is to put the announcement to certain webpages and/or to print media. Central government has a webpage www.valtiolle.fi where it is possible to find vacancies. The system of the webpage is named Heli. Heli is a useful tool used as an online recruitment service. For example, through Heli, the announcement can be directed without costs to TE Service (www.mol.fi) which is a webpage for vacancies in Finland and abroad. Heli can also be utilised as a CV bank.

Vacancies can also be promoted in ministries or agency's own website without costs. Other websites should be considered carefully. Other websites might not be free of charge and other websites has not been proven as effective as valtiolle.fi.

Recruitment has increased in social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) and social media websites as a recruitment tool should be considered at least. For example, valtiolle.fi has a Facebook page.



Print media can also be considered as an effective channel in recruitment. Helsingin Sanomat is the most used newspaper to promote vacancies.

Other way to promote vacancies is to use headhunting. Headhunting is searching for possible candidates for a vacancy and contacting them directly if they are interested of the vacancy. Headhunting is usually outsourced to a specialised company. The consultant in the company searches for possible candidates based on the expectations. The consultants usually have a wide network so they can easily find the possible candidates. Central government can not use headhunting alone as a recruitment channel because the vacancies are open and public; headhunting can only be used as an extra method. Headhunting is not very recommendable because it is expensive. For example, headhunting for a director for a medium-sized company costs approximately 25 000-35 000 euros (Helsingin Sanomat, 11.3.2014).

Instead of using expensive headhunting companies, networking is one way. In this case, the recruitment ministry or agency contacts the applicable applicants directly.

List of information that should be included in the promotion of vacancy (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 18-23):

- Tasks
- Department or unit (location)
- Permanent or fixed-term
- Requirements and expectation
- Contact details and who provides additional information
- Deadline for applications

3.2 Assessment phase

Assessment phase includes the handling and categorising of applicants, selecting the applicants who qualify to interviews, checking for background and references and carrying out a personnel evaluation or an in-depth interview.

There are many ways to categorise applications as mentioned before in chapter “Applications and interviews” and also there are many ways to carry out interviews. The ideal recruitment process describes that there should be pre-interview (longlist),

the main interview (shortlist) and personnel evaluation or an in-depth interview. If there is a possibility to have many rounds of interviews and the recruiters are experienced, there is a high chance of succeeding in the recruitment process (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 37-38).

3.2.1 Categorizing of applications

The applications can be found in the Heli online recruitment system if applications have all been sent online. It is also still possible to send an application in paper by post; in that case the application will be added to Heli.

At this point of recruitment process, it should be fairly easy to identify the applications who will not qualify further if the preparation phase has been completed well. When screening through applications, it is important to remember the previously set criteria, requirements and expectations. In addition, the applications should not be analyzed too much. All the applicants should be treated and compared equally. The summary and comparison of applicants can be executed in Heli (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 38-39).

3.2.2 Interviews – the most important source of information

The purpose of a pre-interview (or first interview) is to get a general impression of 5 to 10 applicants. There should be at least 2 people to carry out the first interview. The idea is to get some additional details that occurred in an application. There is also a chance to measure the motivation of applicants and make sure the applicants know where they have applied exactly. The interviewers have the chance to introduce the organisation and it is recommended to provide organisation's brochures and additional information. This creates positive employer image.

A typical amount of applicants who qualify to the main interview is 3 to 5 applicants. There should be a maximum of 3 interviewers but if necessary, a fourth interviewer is also acceptable. For example, the interviewers could be the recruitment manager and his or her manager and an employee with high expertise on human resources matters.

The goal of the main interview is to acquire information in order to make the final decision. The interview is not only about acquiring more details on education, work experience or opinions, it is important to observe the overall interaction too. The interview questions can not be personal; they can only be work-related questions. For example, it is not acceptable to ask questions relating to personal family life, political or religion activities.

The key questions of the interview should relate to work experience, work success, core competences, education, other activities related to work, leadership skills, motivation, values, self-image and current situation. The interview also covers practical questions, such as salary request and possible date to start. The questions should not be sensitive in the first interview. The interview questions are usually structured and decided before-hand. The questions though should be used flexibly as situations vary because if the questions only follow the set structure, the interview will end up being too dull.

The common mistakes in an interview are lack of consistency, poor preparations, lack of interviewing skills, shyness or dominance of the interviewer, making generalizations and wrong interpretations. As the situation is usually causing stress to the interviewee, this can be notified from expressive behavior and other reactions. The applicant might hesitate in answering, make quick movements, move inadvertently or breathe rapidly, for example. These reactions are normal. Therefore, based on these reactions, the interviewer can only make assumption and not make final judgments or interpretations.

The interview ends with informing about the next steps in the recruitment process. At this point, it is recommendable to ask permission to contact applicant's previous work places. The last question should be: "Is there something you would like to ask us?"(Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 46-74)

3.2.3 Checking of history and references

It is important to ask permission to check for information and references from the applicant's previous work places.

The Act on the Protection of Privacy in Working Life states: “The employer shall collect personal data about the employee primarily from the employee him/herself. In order to collect personal data from elsewhere, the employer must obtain the consent of the employee. However, this consent is not required when an authority discloses information to the employer to enable the latter to fulfil a statutory duty or when the employer acquires personal credit data or information from the criminal record in order to establish the employee's reliability”.

The information which is acquired is recommendable to be concrete information on applicant's actions. The information on personality is usually useless because the previous employer has their own interpretations (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 75-76).

3.2.4 Personnel evaluation – testing of the top applicants

Personnel evaluation can also be referred as an aptitude test, psychological testing or testing (in general). The evaluation is made by an outside organization that is specialized in testing. The evaluation takes one full working day. It is not compulsory to use personnel evaluation but the evaluation brings useful in-depth information from applicant's mental capacity, abilities to conceptualize and interaction skills. Personnel evaluation can be utilized if the two top applicants have quite the same qualities and it is difficult to make a decision, for example. Personnel evaluation also creates objectiveness because the one who performs the evaluation is an expert from outside of the organization and it sets the applicants to be treated even more equally.

There is also a possibility to carry out an in-depth interview instead of carrying out personnel evaluation. There are usually 1 to 3 top applicants who qualify to an in-depth interview. Generally, the interview is carried out with only one interviewer who can be the recruitment manager or someone from the senior management. The purpose of this interview is to measure commitment for the final time, for example (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 76-85)

3.3 Compilation phase and basic guidelines

Compilation phase includes assessment and preparing a decision, making the decision or proposal of decision and acknowledgement. There are certain specific guidelines which do not necessarily exist in the private sector, for example.

Appointment consideration (suom. nimitysharkinta) means making a comparison of applicants who fill the qualifications criteria. Appointment consideration is part of making an appointment decision and when all the necessary information of applicants has been acquired, the next phase is appointment consideration. Based on the information which has been acquired from the applications and interviews, one applicant is proposed to be appointed to the position.

According to the State Civil Servants' Act, the applicant who is proposed to be appointed to a senior manager level position is obliged to report liabilities which might affect any requirements to perform appointed tasks (suom. sidonnaisuusilmoitus). The applicant must report about business activities, business ownerships and other assets, tasks which are not included in the position, secondary employment or other liabilities which might affect in managing of the tasks which are being appointed.

Security clearance is applied during recruitment process from the police. Naturally, the security clearance demands the applicant's permission. The purpose of the security clearance is to prevent different crimes that might harm Finland's internal or external security, defense or international relations. The security clearance document is considered as highly confidential.

A ministry or government agency/authority is usually not obliged to request a report concerning the applicant's overall health but the recruitment authority can decide to request it. The purpose of the report is to make sure that the applicant is able to work.

Appointment memorandum (suom. nimitysmuistio) belongs to every recruitment process in central government. Appointment memorandum is a public document which states a comparison of applicants and reasons for selecting the best applicant for a position (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 87, 92-102).

3.3.1 Assessment and preparing a decision

The amount of information which accumulates through recruitment process is vast. As mentioned before, it is important to remember the criteria which were set in the beginning of the recruitment process. The employees who were involved in the interviews should assemble to reflect their observations; which of the candidates seem the most suitable?

It is fairly easy to reflect on education or work experience because those details should be reliable. Other reliable information is the results from the personnel evaluation. On the contrary, it is not easy to reflect on long-term motivation and adaptability, for example. However, the one who makes the final decision should be supported in the decision-making. Everyone who has been somehow involved in the recruitment process (in the interviews) should present their opinions and reflections. It is always a good sign if a consensus is reached (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 88-89).

3.3.2 Decision and acknowledgement

Decision or proposal of decision (if the final decision is made by the Government) should be prepared in according to the statutes. In addition, the decision should be justified so that the other applicants will know that they were treated equally and they were not underestimated.

It is very common that all of the applicants do not receive an acknowledgement of the decision during a recruitment process in the private sector. The standard in ministries and government agencies is different; it is only polite to notify all the applicants about the decision. The top applicants will receive a phone call of the decision and the reasons of the decision are justified. It is important to maintain good connections to the applicants who were not chosen because there is always a possibility that the chosen applicant might not start in the position, for example. Therefore, the non-selected applicants can still be the most potential ones. The decision should also be informed inside the organization and to possible associates (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 89-92).

4 Implementation of research

The following chapter presents the research methods utilized in the thesis. The research was constructed using only qualitative research methods. The main research method was to carry out personal interviews. Other qualitative method was to study appointment memoranda. Qualitative research method was chosen because carrying out a quantitative research does not seem more suitable. For example, if a survey was constructed, it would be too long and the targeted respondents are usually very busy. Of course, quantitative research is possible but qualitative methods are seen more suitable for this thesis.

4.1 Conducting of interviews

The interviews were conducted between 31 January and 24 March 2014. The government authorities/agencies and interviewees were suggested by the Ministry of Finance. The interview questions (attachment 2) were designed based on the publication *Valitse oikein – opas valtionhallinnon johtajien ja asiantuntijoiden rekrytointiin* (Laine, K & Äijälä K, 2013). The goal was to use similar questions so I created a semi-structured interview. It would have not been natural to create a strict structured interview because the agencies had different fields of business. Interviews were carried out in Finnish to five different government agencies. The agencies were Tekes, Tulli, Väestörekisterikeskus, Trafi and Evira.

Tekes is the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation. Tekes is a publicly funded organization financing research, development and innovation in Finland and it is part of the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Tekes was founded in 1983 through the President of Finland, Mr Mauno Koivisto. Tekes has over 3000 businesses and 50 educational institutes as customers per year and the annual budget for project funding is approximately 600 million euros. Tekes has approximately 300 employees (Tekes.fi).

Tulli is the Finnish Customs supervised by the Ministry of Finance and is also part of the customs system of the European Union (EU). Tulli employs approximately 2300

employees. The main duties of the Finnish customs are collecting taxes on goods and facilitate trade of goods (Tulli.fi).

Väestörekisterikeskus is the Finnish Population Register Centre founded in 1969 and it is part of the Ministry of Finance. There currently approximately 120 employees working in the Centre. The main responsibility of the Centre is to take count of Finnish population (Vrk.fi).

Trafi is the Finnish Transport Safety Agency and is part of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Trafi began to operate in the year 2010 when four other agencies merged. Trafi has approximately 500 employees. Trafi's responsibilities are to promote traffic safety and sustainable development in the transport system and to be charge of transport system regulatory (Trafi.fi).

Evira is the Finnish Food Safety Authority and their main objectives are to ensure food safety, advance animal health and promote plant health. Evira is part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and it was founded in the year 2006 and Evira employes about 750 employees (Evira.fi).

The logo for Teakes, featuring the word "Teakes" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.The logo for TULLI TULL·CUSTOMS, featuring a blue square with a yellow floral emblem on the left, followed by the word "TULLI" in blue and "TULL·CUSTOMS" in orange below it.

Väestörekisterikeskus
Befolkningsregistercentralen

The logo for TraFi, featuring a green and blue stylized wave icon on the left, followed by the word "TraFi" in blue and "Liikenteen turvallisuusvirasto" in black below it.The logo for Evira, featuring an orange stylized leaf icon on the left, followed by the word "Evira" in blue and "Elintarviketurvallisuusvirasto Evira" in black below it.

The goal was to interview employees in the human resources decision-making level, for example directors. The Ministry of Finance suggested agencies and employees which would possibly be able to participate to the interview. The candidates were contacted by e-mail and they were asked if they were interested in participating to an interview. I introduced myself and the research topic and provided the publication Valitse oikein – opas valtionhallinnon johtajien ja asiantuntijoiden rekrytointiin (Laine, K & Äijälä K, 2013) as an attachment. The reserved time for the interview was 30 to 60 minutes and

the interviews were recorded. The full recordings are treated as confidential; they will not be sent or played to a third party.

4.2 Study of appointment memoranda

As mentioned before, appointment memorandum is a public document which states a comparison of applicants and reasons for selecting the best applicant for a position.

The appointment memorandum also states the following points:

- Short description of the position
- Appointment methods and how the announcement was released
- Selection criteria and other requirements
- Description of tasks
- Review of qualifications and applicability of applicants
- Objective comparison
- Reasons stating why the best applicant is proposed to the position

The appointment memorandum does not have general guidelines on how to prepare the document; each ministry or agency has their own kind of layout, for example. For the applicant, it is important to remember that the appointment memorandum is a public document; anyone who wishes to take a look at the memorandum can ask the document from the ministry or agency directly. In other words, the names and the qualifications are not censored.

5 Acquired results

The following chapter presents the data and results acquired from the personal interviews and observations from appointment memoranda. The names of the interviewees will not be mentioned and direct quotations are avoided; the results are presented in a general level in order to avoid misinterpretations later. The interview frame can be seen in attachment 2. The interviews were recorded using smart phone application and the interviews were transcribed.

5.1 Results concerning preparation phase of recruitment process

As mentioned before, preparation phase of recruitment process included resource planning, task analysis, setting of selection criteria and tasks and publishing the job advertisement (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 36).

All of the interviewees described that the resource planning is done carefully. For example, if an employee retires after a long career, a new employee is not automatically recruited to substitute the previous employee. First step is to consider if the position is necessary anymore; is there really a need to hire a new employee if the position can be filled otherwise. The next step is to consider the tasks and if there are currently available resources that qualify to take responsibility of the tasks if there is the need for recruitment. Is there a possibility to divide or combine tasks? The internal recruitment is effective for seven working days and after that the next step is to start external recruitment.

As the current economic situation is difficult, internal recruitment or different resource planning seems to be the most common option of recruitment. On the other hand, it is important to find expertise and new perspective to an organisation so therefore; external recruitment is the most common procedure when recruitment a senior manager. Of course, this can not be generalized with every government agency.

The duration of the senior management positions in the studied agencies varied slightly; the positions were fixed-term for five or more years or the position was permanent. Usually, the Director General's position is fixed-term and the other senior

manager positions are permanent. Another way is to have an executive board in which the positions are fixed-term but the employee has also “a background position” together with the fixed-term executive position.

Task analysis was seen as an important step but there were different practices. One agency prepared the job description in the beginning with cooperation of the recruitment manager, human resource expert and one executive board member. Together they discuss and comment on the job description until it is finalized. Some agency had prepared a broad description of different positions before and it is a good background for a task analysis every time when there is need for recruitment. Another agency mentioned that it is important to analyse the future too; where the organisation will be in five to ten years and what kind of expertise is needed then. All in all, the task analysis is usually team work even though there are slight differences in practical matters.

Every studied agency valued practical leadership skills and leadership skills a much emphasized during recruitment process. Leadership is seen as a profession and it is essential that the manager has versatile experience in leadership. Leadership skills can be difficult to measure because it is qualitative and the meaning of leadership skill is very broad as seen on page 19 of this thesis. Of course, every agency follow the set criteria; minimum of master’s degree education and sufficient language skills for example.

Every agency mentioned that Swedish language skills are important and Swedish skills are required but English is seen more useful than Swedish in practice. Other language skills are not required but can be seen as an advantage; it depends on the tasks. For example, if the employee is obliged to participate in international or European level summits and other meetings, of course, other languages (German, French, and Russian) are an advantage but as mentioned before other language skills are hardly required.

Language skills are not tested in a certain way in the interview or later but of course, they can be tested but the tests are not official language tests. Usually, the candidate has to proof language skills in other way; through studies or work experience. If the interviewer wants to test language skills that is possible by performing questions in Swedish or English in the interview or later in personnel evaluation.

All the announcements of open positions are transferred to Heli from which the announcements can be added to www.valtiolle.fi and www.mol.fi websites. Some agencies saw that it is important to add the announcement to agency's own website and some agencies saw that it is sufficient to add the job advertisement only to valtiolle.fi and mol.fi and maybe to some print media. Other possible websites are www.oikotie.fi and www.monster.fi.

Print media is seen also as an important channel to publish job advertisements, especially Helsingin Sanomat which is the main newspaper in Finland. The advertisement is published on Sunday and ministries and agencies can use the same advertisement space as seen in picture 1.

Picture 1. Example of Helsingin Sanomat job advertisement.



valtiolle.fi

Vaikuta valtiolla

Valtion rooli on kattava ja mielenkiintoisten työpaikkojen kirjo suuri. Tarjoamme alansa ammattilaisille oivallisia näköalapaikkoja.

Etsimme osaajia kymmeniin eri tehtäviin, esim. seuraaviin:

JOHTAMISTEHTÄVÄT
Työ- ja elinkeinotoimiston johtaja Uudenmaan ELY-keskus, Porvoo (540-376-10)

ASiantuntijatehtävät
Työmarkkina-asiantuntija Poliisihallitus, Helsinki (200-424-10)
Tutkija MTT (Maa- ja elintarviketalouden tutkimuskeskus), Helsinki (400-129-10)
Veroasiantuntija Pääkaupunkiseudun verotoimisto, Vantaa (300-371-10)

PALVELUTEHTÄVÄT
Assistentti Hallinnon tietotekniikkakeskus HALTIK, Vantaa (200-427-10)

Hakulainaukset ovat kokonaisuudessaan luettavissa osoitteessa www.valtiolle.fi. Sulkeissa olevat työvälineet ohjaavat tehtäviin. Hakemukset pyydetään toimittamaan hakujan kuluessa sivustolla olevalla sähköisellä lomakkeella.

Other print media can be used as well but that must be considered carefully. Other possible newspapers are for example Hufvudstadsbladet, Kauppalehti, Talouselämä or some local newspapers depending on the tasks and the target audience.

Using social media as a recruitment tool seems to be increasing in the agencies but social media is not the main tool; traditional ways are still the most used. Some agencies had a Facebook page but do not use it as a recruitment channel but are aware

that using Facebook will increase in the future. LinkedIn is also used, some agencies had their own LinkedIn profile or an employee used their own LinkedIn profile actively as a recruitment tool. Some agencies mentioned that it is not necessary to invest in social media yet because traditional ways of recruitment still attract enough applicants to positions.

Headhunting is not used or it is used very rarely. Headhunting is seen as too expensive and often an agency wants to take care of recruitment from the beginning to the end. Some agency had used headhunting before and it was only used in the beginning of the process to help in contacting potential candidates for example.

According to the results, all of the agencies use networking in recruitment. It seems that all of the interviewees have large amount of different contacts which they can contact and promote an open position.

As a conclusion, all of the studied agencies follow the model process of recruitment in preparation phase set by the Ministry of Finance even though there are some differences.

5.2 Results concerning assessment phase

Assessment phase of recruitment process includes categorizing of applications, interviews, checking of history and references and personnel evaluation (Laine, K & Äijälä, K. 2013, 85).

The most common way to categorise the applications was to pile the applications to three different piles; yes, maybe and no according to the results. In addition, categorizing of applications is seen as team work; the choices are made together through discussion. One agency mentioned that the human resource unit or department prepares a comparison table of top applicants to the recruitment manager. The table presents education, three recent work places and other essential information. All of the agencies mentioned that the applications are always reflected to the criteria and job description which were set in preparation phase. The average amount of applicants that qualify for an interview is 5-10 applicants.

The interviewing practices differed slightly from the ideal recruitment process model. None of the agencies use “pre-interview” as it is presented in the publication. All of the agencies proceed straight to the main interview which typically lasts for 45-60 minutes and if it is necessary there is a second round of interview. Using pre-interview was not seen effective or necessary but of course using pre-interview is possible depending on the amount of applicants or is it fairly easy to decide the top candidates, for example.

The average amount of interviewers is 2-3. Usually the recruitment manager and a human resource specialist participate to the interview. One possibility is to have two interviewers in the first interview and then the recruitment manager interviews in the second round. Another possibility is to have the recruitment manager present in the first interview and then hold the second round interviewing alone the top candidates. Second round is used if there are some details that come up during the process and the details are wished to verify. The interview questions are decided beforehand and the interview frame is rather structured. Structured interview frame ensures equal treatment of candidates and comparing and making the final decision will be easier if every applicant has been asked same questions. The questions relate to expertise, leadership skills and experience, attitudes, values, motivation, interaction skills, working skills, language skills, presentation skills and visibility in the media. The organization is also presented and in the end there is time reserved to tell more about the tasks and give an opportunity to ask more. Finally, the recruitment organization tells about the progress of the recruitment process.

Personnel evaluation is utilized if it is necessary. Personnel evaluation is seen as an extra tool in recruitment process. The evaluation takes one full working day and evaluations are made by an outside organization. The recruitment manager first discusses about the expectations, criteria and tasks with the outside consultant. A personnel evaluation measures the ability to endure stress, leadership skills, motivation, interaction skills and personal qualities, for example. The average amount of applicants who qualify to a personnel evaluation is 2-4 applicants.

As a conclusion, the interview preparations must be done carefully. The interview questions must be planned beforehand and enough time must be reserved. When the application period has ended, it is easy to begin with the applications that definitely do

not fill the standards so therefore the remaining applications can be then studied more closely.

5.3 Results concerning compilation phase

All of the agencies mentioned that they make notes during the interview and the observations and impressions of competence are discussed together after the interview has ended. The most of the agencies mentioned that after all the interviews have ended, they have a discussion of all the information acquired during the recruitment process. The expectations and the criteria set in the beginning are recalled and the information is reflected on those. The applicant who seems the most qualified (fills all or almost all the criteria and expectations) and is considered to be suitable for the organisation's culture and is highly motivated, for example, is chosen (or presented to be chosen).

According the results, every agency will call to the applicants who have participated to the interview phase and announce about the decision. Through the Heli recruitment system, every applicant is acknowledged about the process, for example, if the applicant is qualified for an interview and in the end all of the applicants receive an e-mail about the whole recruitment process and who was chosen. Acknowledging of the process and the final decision is seen as very important.

None of the agencies collect feedback separately from the applicants concerning the recruitment process. Some agencies saw that collecting feedback might be a good idea and it is something that can be considered. On the other hand, there should be a natural way to ask feedback because asking feedback by phone is not quite suitable. Feedback could possibly be collected using the Heli system.

Some agencies saw that collecting separate feedback is not necessary because feedback is already received spontaneously or collecting feedback is not essential in general. If feedback is received, it will be replied whether the feedback is positive or negative. One agency mentioned that they get mostly positive feedback from keeping the applicants up-to-date in the recruitment process. Sometimes the applicants might ask why they were not invited to an interview or the applicants might send annoyed

feedback because of not being chosen. The applicants might ask feedback about themselves too; how they were seen as an applicant.

Some agencies that it was only natural and important to discuss about the whole recruitment process when the decision has been made. The discussion concern how the recruitment process succeeded overall, how well the potential applicants were reached, was the making of the decision easy and so forth. The discussion might not be held only once, the discussion can be continuous if necessary but the discussion is not systematic or formal. On the contrary, one agency mentioned that they don't hold much discussions after recruitment process because they have many processes active at the same time and multiple recruitment processes in a year.

Based on the results, a typical recruitment process of a senior manager lasts for 2-3 months. Even though 2-3 months is quite a long time, the applicants do not have to wait for a long time during the recruitment process because if everything has been prepared well before the interviews. Due to meticulous preparations, the assessment and compilation phase will proceed quickly.

Every studied agency signifies that there is always a possibility that the recruitment process can fail but all of the agencies mentioned that recruitment process has never failed when recruitment a senior manager. A recruitment process can fail for number of reasons; the chosen applicant is not able to start in the position, the applicant sees later that the tasks does not match to the expectations or the applicant is not able to get results, for example.

If the tasks do not fill the applicant's expectations or results are not reached, the applicant should discuss about the issues with the manager as soon as possible. It depends on the situation what can be done in order to improve the situation but discussion is essential. If the applicant is not able to start in the position, then generally the second or third most qualified is chosen. Some agencies have a 6-month trial period but if the employment relationship is annulled during the trial period, the grounds for annulation must be strong.

5.4 How to make the recruitment process successful?

One of the objectives of this thesis is to find out how to make the recruitment process successful and make sure to choose the right candidate to a position. The answers were all different but all of them are good points. The following points summarize the results concerning how to succeed in recruitment process:

- Investing in to the process from the beginning
- Meticulous preparations
- Attractive job advertisement
- Structured and well prepared interviews
- Honesty
- Checking of references
- Discussions and team work
- The manager invests time and effort during the first months of employment

Arranging time and effort to the whole recruitment process is essential. In other words, it is useless to publish a job advertisement and hope for the best. Discussion and team work is important because through discussion the team is able to get different perspectives on applicants. The manager must also be present and active during the first months of employment. In that way the employee gets the correct image of the tasks and duties.

5.5 Observations on appointment memoranda

As mentioned before, appointment memorandum (suom. nimitysmuistio) belongs to every recruitment process in central government. Appointment memorandum is a public document which states a comparison of applicants and reasons for selecting the best applicant for a position.

A few appointment memoranda were collected from agencies and ministries. First impression of appointment memoranda was that they seem immensely public and personal in some way because all the names of the applicants are mentioned in the document. In addition, all of the candidates are compared. The qualifications of top

candidates are presented. For example: “Candidate XX has a master’s degree in Economics and Business Administration. Candidate XX currently works as Chief Financial Officer...” The language in the memoranda is very formal and although the memoranda were collected from different ministries and agencies, they all follow quite similar standards. All of the memoranda follow the guidelines as presented in the model recruitment process model. The memoranda provide introduction, description of tasks, duties, requirements and selection criteria, objective comparison and the reasons why one applicant was chosen to the position.

6 Conclusion

Recruitment process is always challenging. It might be difficult to get certainty when it comes to qualifications and recruitment process is made by people so therefore, the information acquired through the process is not exact. Recruitment is a big financial investment and the whole process takes a long time. Maybe all the preparations and other requirements in the process described in the ideal process model take too much time because the job market and competition are hard nowadays; the applicant might get other job offers too and does not have time to wait one employer to finalise their recruitment process. Recruitment in central government is highly regulated; there are certain rules, acts and guidelines which must be followed.

Based on the results, team work is highly appreciated in recruitment process. Assistance in all recruitment process matters is always available. Recruitment is also very predetermined so therefore in that perspective recruitment in the central government can be seen as easy. In addition, the process is very open and public compared to private sector. The candidates are treated equally and they can make sure of it. The tools are already set so that employees do not have to think about different procedures every time when there is a need for recruitment.

The hypothesis of the results was that the studied agencies would differ much more from the ideal recruitment process model. The expectation was that the agencies would have had completely different practices. As seen from the results, it can be said that every studied agency follow the ideal recruitment process model except when it comes to using pre-interview; none of the agency admitted to use pre-interview like it was described in the recruitment process model.

6.1 Validity and reliability of the research

Did the research of this thesis reach its objectives and can the results be considered as reliable? The objectives were to find out what kind of process recruitment is in central government and in government agencies and how to make recruitment process successful. All the objectives were reached. This thesis explains the recruitment process

model in detail and the objective was to explain the model briefly and in a more understandable way.

The interviews were constructed to be as similar as possible in order to get comparable results. The interviews were carried out ethically; permissions were asked, the interviewees got the same information and the names of the interviewees are not revealed in this thesis. In addition, the recordings or their transliterations will not be shown, sent or played to a third party.

The interviews went well but improvements could have been done. All of the studied agencies did not receive the interview questions beforehand. On the contrary, that does not have seemed to be having any effect on the research outcome. Secondly, the writer of this thesis did not have previous experience in carrying out interviews. The interview questions were prepared individually; a second party never commented on the interview questions and that might have improved the level of quality. Finally, the research could have got more perspective by interviewing more than just five different government agencies but due to lack of time that was not possible.

6.2 Personal learning experience

It was not easy to produce this thesis because I did not have previous experience in working with a big project all by myself. I can admit that I was afraid to start working and to write this thesis. I feel that I should have asked more support throughout this whole writing and research process. At first, I did not feel comfortable with the idea that I had to get a commissioning party in order to write a thesis; I wanted to develop the topic for a thesis by myself. Later, I noticed that it was only good to have a commissioning party to give me guidance. I knew from the beginning of my studies which subject will be my major subject. I find human resources extremely interesting and I hope to find a career within the field of HR.

I felt unsure throughout the whole thesis process. First of all, I did not have any idea how to proceed with the thesis when I got the topic in December 2012. I was also busy with studies since the last official academic year started in January 2013 if I wished to graduate as planned in 3,5 years. I pushed back the thought that I should be producing

my thesis already if I want to graduate in December 2013. As a result I did not graduate as planned and my studies were extended for another semester because I kept postponing with starting. All of my other studies proceeded as planned and I managed to pass all the courses but only writing the bachelor's thesis was difficult. I regret that I did not start earlier but I feel content now because I was finally able to finish this project. If I end up doing a similar project again, I will definitely start early.

Interviewing was an exciting experience and interviewing demands to have certain skills which I would like to learn more about. I feel glad that I had the opportunity to visit different government agencies and meet many professionals.

I think that based on this thesis, more studies on the same subject can be made but with a larger and more professional scale. I feel that the research was done correctly and I was able to find many good references for background theory. I also feel that I learned a lot from the topic; what recruitment process is all in all and what recruitment demands. I hope that the commissioning party will benefit from this Bachelor's thesis and this thesis will be considered as useful now and in the future too.

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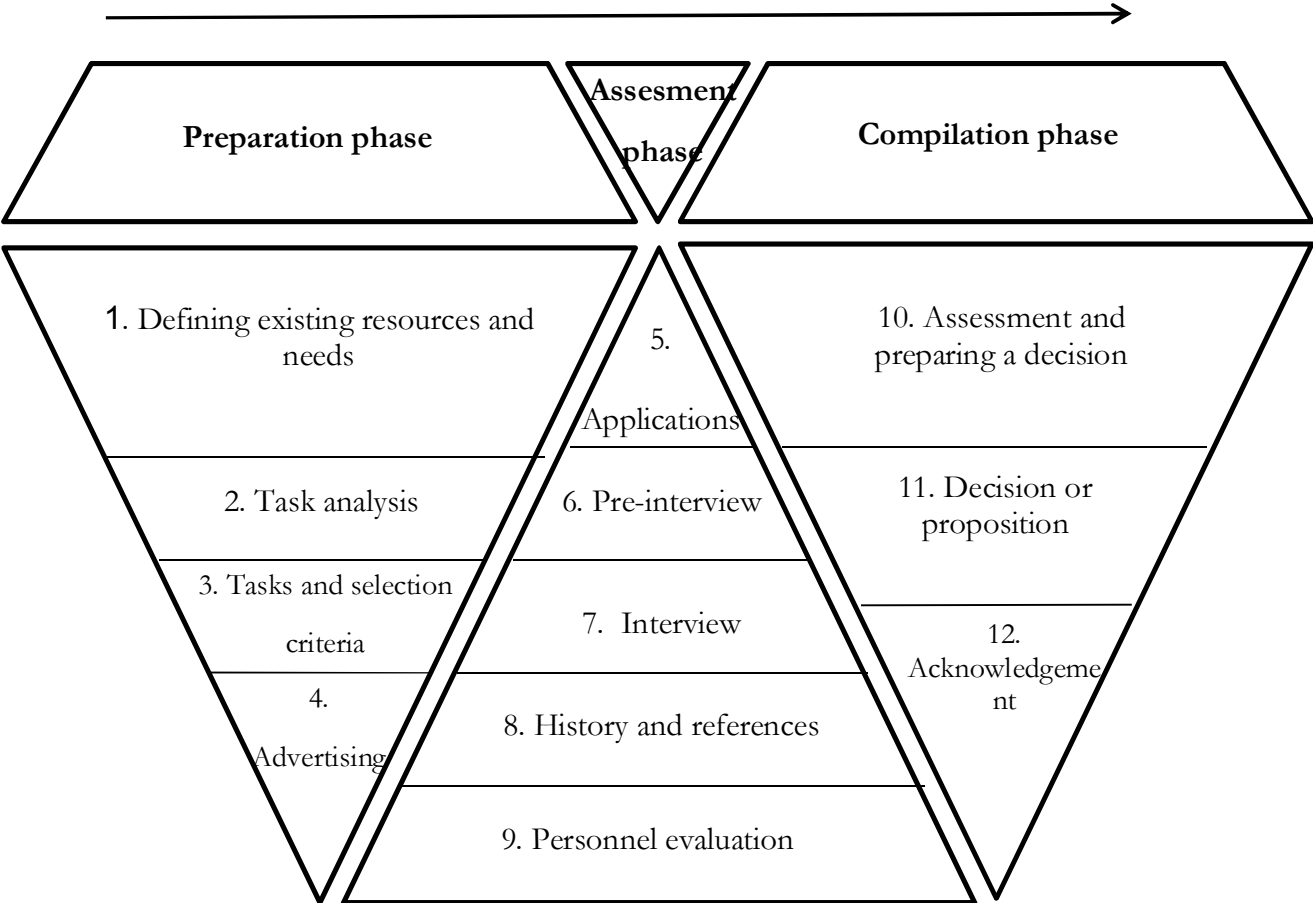
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Attachments

Attachment 1. Recruitment process model in the Ministry of Finance (Laine, K & Äijälä K. 2013, 109)



Attachment 2. Interview frame.

Preparation phase

1. Introduction
2. How the recruitment need is defined in practice? For example, if someone retires or leaves for some other reason; is the first step to consider internal recruitment and then it is time to proceed to external recruitment?
3. Task analysis is presented to be one of the most important parts in a recruitment process although it might take a lot of time. How the task analysis is prepared in practice?
4. With the task analysis, the job description and selection criteria can be set. In the year 2011, the selection criteria for senior management posts in central government were published and the requirements for a senior manager are master's degree education, practical leadership skills and good language skills for example. Are these requirements paid regard to?
5. Is there a ranking for language skills?

Assessment phase

6. In which channel the announcement of an open position is published; newspapers, web pages, social media? Is headhunting utilized or networking?
7. How the applications are categorized in practice?
8. Description of interviews:
 - Pre-interview: Questions? Duration? Interviewers?
 - Main interview: Questions? Duration? Interviewers?
 - Personnel evaluation?

Compilation phase

9. How all the information acquired from the whole recruitment process in practice?
10. How the applicants are acknowledged?
11. Is feedback requested from the applicants of the recruitment process?

12. Is the recruitment process evaluated in general in the agency?
13. Estimation of duration of the whole recruitment process?
14. There is always the possibility to make a mistake in choosing the applicant to a position; what is done in that case?
15. How to make the recruitment process successful and make sure to choose the right candidate?
16. What is easy or challenging during recruitment process?