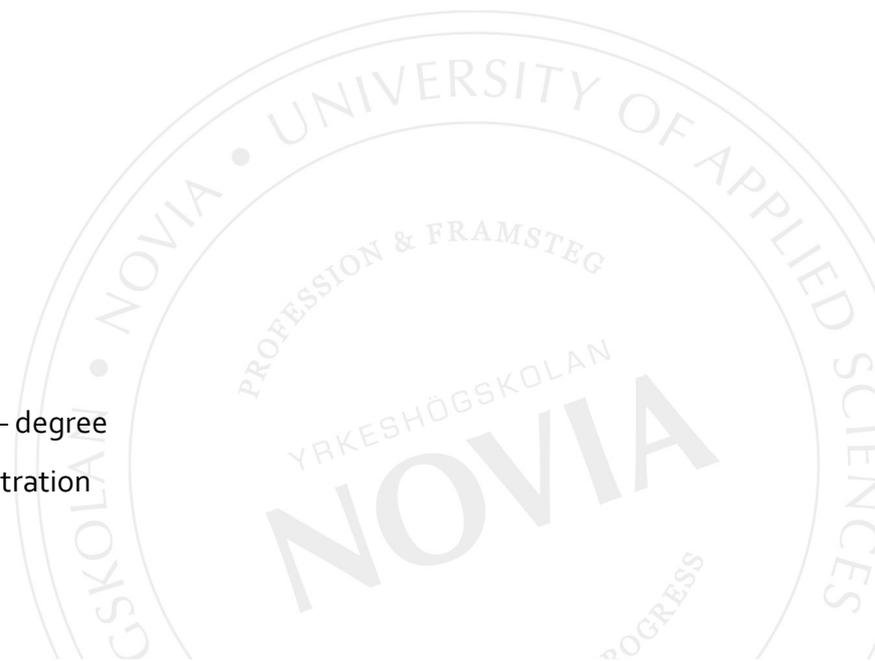


The Influence of the Employer Brand on the Recruiting Process of Finnish Generation Z

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Abstract

The goal of the thesis is to find out how the employer brand affects the recruiting process of Finnish Generation Z. For this purpose, the thesis first covers theory about recruiting and the employer brand. For the empirical part of the thesis, an article by Kathy Steele describing five steps to create a better employer brand, was chosen as the basis. The empirical part consists of two qualitative studies.

For the first qualitative study a recruiter was interviewed. The purpose of the interview was to find out their opinion on the five steps mentioned by Steele. Additionally, the thesis should show how important the employer brand is for the recruiting process.

The second qualitative study consists of eight interviews with representatives of the target employee group. In these interviews their opinions on the five steps were investigated. The purpose of the interview was to find out how implementing these steps would affect their thoughts on applying for a position.

The ultimate goal of the thesis was to find out how to best attract the target employee group. A recommendation on what a company should do to attract them was made at the end of the thesis.

Language: English

Key words: employer brand, recruiting, Finns, Generation Z

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1. Introduction

Hiring the right employees is becoming progressively more difficult. On the one hand, globalization and digitalization allow for a bigger talent pool. On the other hand, due to the low unemployment rate, these talents are often already hired by another company. Additionally, employees have higher expectations of what their employers stand for and what they offer them. The employer brand is partially to blame for this. Consequently, recruiters not only have more places to look for new talents, they also need to make sure that what they offer them fits the candidate's standards. In this thesis, it shall be elaborated how a company can improve their employer brand in order for it to benefit them in their recruiting efforts. The thesis will focus specifically on young Finns who fall into the age group of Generation Z.

In the end, the thesis should clarify whether or not a company that invests in their employer brand has better chances at attracting talent from the target employee group. Additionally, Kathy Steele's theory on the five steps that can be used to improve a company's employer brand shall be evaluated. Kathy Steele is the CEO of Red Caffeine, a growth consultancy company that, amongst other topics, focuses on the employer branding of their clients. They help their customers defining and empowering their purpose-driven cultures with brand assets and campaigns in order to improve their recruiting as well as the employee engagement (Steele w.y.).

1.1 Methodology

The first part of the thesis will be a literature review to gain the basic knowledge on the topics of recruiting and employer brand. For the literature review itself, articles will act as the primary source, due to the topic being a fairly new one. However, books will be used as sources as well, when appropriate. The theoretical part is necessary in order for the following empirical parts to be easily understood. It is also important to note that for the theoretical part about recruiting, the main focus will be on the recruitment process itself. Additionally, the recruiting social media networks will be talked about. Since the employee target group is Finnish Generation Z, the Finnish culture as well as the characteristics of Generation Z will be explained as well.

Kathy Steele's five steps to improve a company's employer brand will be part of the theoretical part. Additionally, it will be the basis for the empirical part of the thesis, which will consist of two separate studies.

The first part will be a qualitative study, in the form of an interview with an employee from a recruiting agency in Turku. This interview will answer thoughts on the employer brand from the recruiter's side. Most of the questions will be about Steele's five steps. This should allow for a recruiter's opinion on how useful and implementable they are for companies.

The second part of the study will be another qualitative study. For this purpose, interviews with the target employee group of the thesis will be conducted, to see their thoughts on the employer brand. Again, the questions will be based on Steele's theory, to see the accurateness of it.

1.2 Limitations

Within the thesis, the employer's perspective was intentionally left out. The aim of the thesis was to see the difference the employer brand has on the one hand on the recruiting process and recruiter's job. On the other hand it should show that the employer brand affects the decision making process of the target employee group during their job search. Talking about the topic with employers was thus deemed unnecessary for the thesis.

Additionally, the thesis specifically focuses on the recruitment of the target employee group within the business sector. This makes the thesis even more targeted towards a certain profession, rather than just talking about Finnish Generation Z in general.

1.3 Purpose of the thesis

The main purpose of the thesis is to find out how the employer brand affects the recruiting process of Finnish Generation Z. Theory by Kathy Steele will be used to conduct the different interviews. The research questions for the thesis are:

- How important is it to focus on the employer brand?
- What are Steele's five steps in building a successful employer brand?
- What effect do Steele's five steps have on the recruiting process of Finnish Generation Z?

In the end, a recommendation on what companies should do in order to attract the chosen target employee pool. These recommendations should allow for some guidance during the recruiting process.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis will start with the literature review. The first part of the literature review will provide a deeper look in the topic of recruitment. After an initial explanation of what the recruitment process looks like, recruiting will be defined. Followed by an overview of its development throughout the recent years. Next, the working steps of a modern recruiter will be elaborated on. To better understand the target employee group of this thesis, some theory about the group will be looked at. Since recruiting nowadays goes hand in hand with certain social media channels, these will be talked about. Lastly, the current trends in recruiting will be presented.

The second part of the literature review will be about the employer brand. This chapter will start with a quick overview of the employer brand development within a company. This will be followed by a definition of the employer brand. Next, the employer value proposition and the employer brand will shortly be compared. Afterwards an elaboration about the historical development of the employer brand will be made. Next it will be explained, why the employer brand has become so important. This will be followed by a sub-chapter on what makes an employer brand successful. Afterwards, Steele's five-step guide on how to make a successful employer brand will be evaluated, which will conclude the theoretical part.

The empirical part will start with the qualitative research part, which is the interview with the recruiter. Here, the questions asked during the interview will be mentioned first. Next, the findings from the interview will be explained.

The second part of the empirical research will also be a qualitative study, which is the interviews with the chosen representatives of the target employee group. As with the qualitative part, the questions will be mentioned first. Afterwards, a quick overview of the respondents will be made. The quantitative research part will end with the findings from the interviews.

The next part of the thesis will be the conclusion, which will start with a critical view of the research. This will be followed by a recommendation on how to recruit the target employee group. A suggestion for future studies will also be made.

2. Recruiting

Before going deeper into the topic of recruiting, it is important to understand what the different stages in recruiting are. In the figure below, the recruiting process according to Fernández-Aráoz, Groysberg & Nohria (2009) is displayed. The figure is used for a better visualization of the process. The steps are explained in the paragraph below.

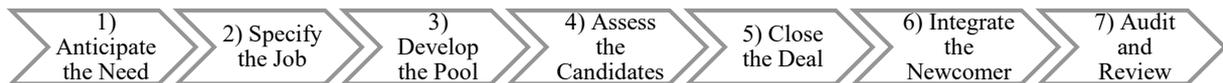


Figure 1: Recruiting process (Fernández-Aráoz, Groysberg & Nohria, 2009); self-made visualization

Recruiting is an ongoing process, that involves more than just the attraction of new employees. It starts with the continuous analysis of future needs a company might have. This is necessary, so a company knows when they will need people and when they should start with the hiring process. As soon as a need is discovered, the specific position should be described. Part of that are the specific demands for the applicants as well as the skills and experience they should have. Next, the company needs to develop a pool of candidates. Those could be within, as well as outside of the company. After this is done, the candidates need to be assessed. For this purpose, a few well-trained interviewers should be chosen. In order to be able to close the deal with the most suitable candidate, the job should be described to them realistically. After the candidate becomes an employee at the company it is important to integrate them properly. For this, the newcomer should have regular checkups with his or her supervisors. The last step in the recruiting process is the audit and review. Here, the recruitment process should be evaluated. This allows the company to improve their recruiting process with each hiring process. Additionally, bad hires should be let go off (Fernández-Aráoz, Groysberg & Nohria 2009, p 79). It is evident that recruiting is a never-ending process within a company and should thus be taken seriously by the corporation.

This was just a brief overview on the recruiting process in general. Though the thesis will briefly mention all of these steps, steps two, three, five and six will be the most important for the thesis.

2.1 Definition of recruiting

To be able to get a grasp of the recruiting discipline, it is important to know the definition first. As with most definitions, it is hard to point to one that is right since all have valid points, even

though they may differ. Thus, this subchapter will mention a few of the most common definitions of recruitment.

Some experts say that employees belong to the most important assets a business may have. Though technology may help a company in the beginning, the advantages fade as soon as the competition has caught up. Talented, motivated and productive employees however are assets that will help companies to keep their competitive advantage for the long-term (Mansueto Ventures LLC 2018). Thus, making recruiting one of the most influential fields within a business.

Due to the continuously changing business environment, global competition and customer expectations today's companies are dependent on the ability to attract as well as keep high-quality employees who are able to cope with the rapidly changing environment. Generally speaking, recruitment can be defined as the process that involves searching for candidates when vacancies appear as well as selecting the right candidate (Łacka-Badura 2015, p 2).

Still, there are many companies that hire outside recruiters. There are even companies that view recruitment as a nonbusiness, some even as a non-HR, function. Establishing a team of talented recruiters is a costly investment, however it is beneficial in the long term for companies. Not only are the recruiters better informed about the company and what guidance the hiring managers need, the head-hunter fees can be eliminated simultaneously (McCord 2018, p 94).

What one can learn from these definitions is that recruiting should be seen as one of the most important business activities within a company. Employees are what truly determine the success of a company. Generally speaking, recruitment are the activities that are part of finding new employees, whether that may be through an inside or hired outside recruiter.

2.2 Development of modern recruiting

Over the years, the discipline of recruitment has seen multiple changes. In this subchapter, the development of the modern recruiting process will be briefly explained.

There are multiple reasons why a recruiter's guidance is more necessary now than ever. The first being, that since the unemployment rate is low, the talent that exists is often already hired somewhere else (Meister & Willyerd 2010, pp 3–5). This means that the competition for talent has become tougher than it used to be a few years back. Companies and with that recruiters, need to work harder in order to attract talent.

Additionally, since medicine gets more and more advanced and humans are able to work longer, there are more generations to choose from. Currently there are four generations on the job market, starting with the baby boomers which were born up to 70 years ago to the Generation Z who are only now entering the workforce.

Globalization and digitalization are another reason why the pool of candidates got so much larger than it used to be. It is now easier than ever to reach possible future employees all around the world and get them to work for a company in another country or even continent. And lastly, companies receive progressively more pressure to be socially responsible (Meister & Willyerd 2010, pp 3–5). Which means they not only have to be careful with being ethical with their products but also with their employees and their responsibility at having a diverse work environment.

Some might argue that recruiters themselves are redundant now that websites such as LinkedIn exist. This however is not the case, recruiters can offer even more benefit to companies due to the technological change. This can only be achieved if recruiters manage to adapt to these changes (Tarki & Kanara 2019, p 2).

It is clear that recruiting is getting more difficult, since there are overall more people to choose from. This can also be seen vice versa, as it is harder for job seekers to find the right employer for them. A determination factor for that can be the employer brand, which will be talked about later.

2.3 Phases in modern recruiting

In the following paragraphs, the steps a modern recruiter has to follow in order to still be relevant for companies will be described. The job of a recruiter has drastically changed throughout the years. However, for the purpose of this thesis only the modern working process of a recruiter will be looked at.

First, it is important for recruiters to help hiring managers with the definition of the appropriate search strategy. This can be achieved by asking the right questions. Instead of asking what the hiring manager wants, recruiters should ask why they are looking for someone or what impact they want their future employee to have on the company. This will help to guide hiring managers towards the right search strategy and with that towards the right candidates.

Next, recruiters have to be able to get the best candidates to apply. Just posting the job offer and hoping that the right people will apply, is not advisable since the unemployment rate is low, in most countries. Instead, recruiters should send personalized LinkedIn messages (Tarki & Kanara 2019, pp 2–4).

Selecting the best person for the position is not an easy task. Recruiters have to help hiring managers understand how to best predict someone's future job performance. This can be achieved by providing them with categories and even examples of questions to ask. An independent committee for hiring might be beneficial as well. Furthermore, knowledge tests targeted to the position should be considered.

In order to get candidates to actually sign a contract with the company, recruiters need to help hiring managers to have a structured interview process. If the candidate feels uncomfortable or finds the recruitment process too long or unstructured, they might decline a position they initially were excited about.

In order to avoid that, recruiters should talk to the hiring agents about their overall interview process to find out what it looks like. However, the goal of this step should not be done with the intention of changing the hiring agent's way of recruiting. Every hiring manager should have their own process that they are comfortable with, recruiters just have to make sure that the process follows a structured plan and is not improvised (Tarki & Kanara 2019, pp 2–4).

The most important decision, the one of who to hire, should be talked about with the whole team. Everyone involved in the process should be able to give their input. Ultimately though, the responsibility should fall on the hiring manager. In the end, he or she is the one responsible for the performance of the person or overall team they are building, thus they should have the final say (McCord 2018, p 95).

Lastly, an evaluation of the hiring practices is necessary. This needs to be an ongoing effort in order to be able to see which process work and which do not. This crucial step helps recruiters to improve their methodology (Tarki & Kanara 2019, pp 2–4).

Overall, one can see that the recruiter should guide the hiring manager instead of changing their methods and what they look for in people. This way it can be assured that the corporate culture stays accurate and is not influenced or even changed by the recruiter.

2.4 Focusing on the target employee group

In this part of the thesis, the focus lies on the target employee group. In order to have a better understanding of them. This part will be broken down into recruiting Finns and recruiting Generation Z. Afterwards both will be combined in order to draw a conclusion on what is important when wanting to recruit the target employee group.

2.4.1 Recruiting Finns

Culture has an influence on everything a person does, whether they are aware of it or not. Naturally, culture also has an influence on the way a person works and with that there may be differences in the recruiting process.

Finland is one of the happiest countries worldwide. This may stem from its' quality of life due to the good work-life balance and the overall economical thrive. Finns are very passionate about being entrepreneurial and designing a life for themselves in which they can follow their passion (Da Costa 2018). Thus, there are a few things that are important when working with Finns and when recruiting them.

Time is important to Finns, meaning the interview process should be efficient and straight forward. Talking about unnecessary topics should be avoided. It is also important to know, that the wording should be chosen carefully, since Finns take things quite literal and expect what is said to be the truth. This also means, that they can be trusted when talking about their history in interviews (Lewis 2010, pp 332–334).

Finns furthermore do not like bragging, so companies should avoid that. Instead, they should mention their offers in a humble way. Additionally, people in Finland are very independent and are used to making decisions by themselves instead of always checking with their supervisor (Lewis 2010, p 335). To attract them, they should be offered a certain degree of independence whilst doing their work.

2.4.2 Recruiting Generation Z

There are multiple generations at the job market currently. As already mentioned earlier, the oldest ones belong to the Baby Boomer Generation. Since the thesis focuses on how to recruit Gen Z, it is important to know what makes them different from previous generations in terms of work ethics.

Generation Z are the newest generation to enter the workforce. They are classified as those who were born in 1994 and after. This specific group has a unique approach on topics such as diversity, communication, technology as well as benefit expectations, which they expect their employers to keep up with. They have a higher value towards workplace flexibility and healthcare benefits than previous generations. Since the new workforce documents their lives on social media, their employers should do the same to attract them (Eisenberg 2017).

To attract the newest workforce generation, companies have to prepare appropriately. With three out of four people in Generation Z wanting to be an entrepreneur, it is expected to be the most entrepreneurial generation yet, which means employers need to adapt to that. There are a few ways an employer could establish a sense of entrepreneurialism for the employee. One could be setting up so called thought groups where employees are allowed to channel their creativity. Another option could be to give them more responsibilities in order for them to be able to work more independently. Using these tactics will make the employee feel the employer's recognition as well as a sense of ownership and pride in their work, which translates well with their entrepreneurial desires (Murphy & Hutterer 2018, p 73).

Additionally, in order to attract the top talents of Generation Z, there are a few more points companies need to keep in mind. First, employers need to be "cool" in the eyes of Gen Z. Every Generation perceives a good employer differently. For this generation, making a difference is what is most important. Thus, companies need to exceed the stable job standards that Gen X, the generation before Gen Z, looked for. Instead, they need to think about why they offer a dream job for an individual that wants to build something on their own.

Next, companies should keep in mind that talking about the technology they use during their work is nothing new to this generation. Video conferences and file-sharing applications are normal for people that grew up with Wi-Fi and social media. Therefore, it is not a valid sales pitch point when recruiting them. Lastly, companies and with that their supervisors need to be good leaders and influencers at the same time. Using the right media channels, the companies message and values need to be portrayed to the right audience (Murphy & Hutterer 2018, p 73).

2.4.3 Recruiting Finnish Generation Z

Now that it has been established what is important when recruiting Finnish people and when recruiting Gen Z, both can be combined. The over-all Finnish way of working is already very

similar to what is also said about Generation Z. Both want to be entrepreneurial, both value work-life balance and both see being technologically advanced as the standard.

Seeing this, it is even more important to be able to fulfill these aspects when trying to hire a Finn that fall into the age group of Gen Z. Meaning, for companies to get employees of this target group, there is really no way around establishing these points within their company.

2.5 Social media networks for recruiting

In order to be able to attract the top talent a company seeks, it is important to understand today's social media networks and how they can benefit the recruiting process.

Companies should not forget that the people are what makes or breaks a business. Thus, in order to achieve superior strategic success a company has to succeed in recruiting first. One step to ensure that is keeping up with the different social media channels and learning how to use them in order for them to benefit with the recruiting process (Vitale 2016b).

There are multiple social media networks that can be used for recruiting purposes. The one that probably comes to mind first, for most people, is LinkedIn. It is considered to be the world's largest platform for professional networking. Targeting a specific talent pool is made easy by the many filtering options. Employers can search for potential new employees using said filters. Some of them are for example the location, current employer and job functions as well as the years of experience. Additionally, employers can look into past and present employees' professional networks in order to find candidates (Kot 2015).

Glassdoor functions as the counterpart to LinkedIn. Where LinkedIn is used to see an employee's resume, Glassdoor is used to have a closer look at employers. It offers employer ratings and real reviews of past and present employees on topics such as organizational structure, salary and interview questions (Kot 2015). However, just because Glassdoor is used to share employees' thoughts, does not mean that employers cannot use it for their benefit. The feedback given should be taken into account and worked on internally. A good employer brand and with that a good review on Glassdoor, will help the recruiting process.

A maybe less obvious network is Twitter. In order to use the platform correctly, a community of followers that represent the employee target group should be established. Once a community has successfully been established getting them to see the company and what it offers will be more manageable. Furthermore, the community can be scanned for potential employees.

Facebook should not be forgotten when thinking about recruiting networks. It is the world's largest social network, which means a vast amount of people can be reached. Additionally, it offers more freedom to users than Twitter as well as free analytics which can be used for detailed insights into ones following. Just like LinkedIn, Facebook allows employers to publish very targeted job offers (Kot 2015).

Depending on the industry the corporation is in, there may be other social media networks that should be engaged with. A company that specializes in interior design should for example be active on Pinterest. However, no matter which networks are chosen, being authentic should always be the most important. The posts have to be genuine and social instead of having a corporate feel to them (Fisher 2013, p 184).

Overall, social media can help employers to find the top talent if it becomes a part of their recruiting strategy. The tools the different websites offer are necessary to compete in the current fight for talent (Kot 2015).

2.6 Current trends in recruiting

In recruiting, as in every field of business, there are currently trends that arise. They may die down or stay for the long run, either way one needs to be aware of them. This chapter will talk about some of the new trends that have surfaced throughout the past few years.

In 2016 Roy Maurer predicted 5 recruiting trends for the future. The first trend was that the focus on the employer brand will grow. Since top talent is getting progressively harder to attract, companies have to put in more effort to showcase that they are a worthy employer.

The next trend he mentioned was, that the use of talent analytics will increase. Leaders of HR and recruiting are constantly looking for the best way to grasp the talent data in order to develop insights about current and future employees.

The third trend mentioned was that the sourcing scope of employers will be broadened. Since the search for the right candidate may not always be successful due to the lack of talents, companies will try to develop the needed talent internally or even look for it in other industries (Maurer 2016).

Additionally, he mentioned that with that the effect of hiring criteria will change. While hiring there are three aspects that are mostly evaluated, these are personality, aptitude and experience.

Though a person’s personality or aptitude cannot be changed, it can be made sure that they are a fit with the company culture. Furthermore, the focus on experience should be lessened in order to allow less experienced candidates to prove themselves.

Next, he goes on to say that HR will try to repair the candidate experience. What he means with that is that it should be easier for candidates to find job postings and that the initial application process should be shortened. In addition to that, recruiters not responding to candidates should be avoided, since it can leave them discouraged and not wanting to apply to that company again in the future for different positions.

The fifth and last trend he mentioned was that slowly HR technologies will be integrated. Technologies such as applicant tracking systems and video interviewing which was done on multiple platforms will be changed to one (Maurer 2016).

3. Employer brand

Before going deeper into the topic of the employer brand, one should first be aware of how it is developed within a company. The figure below is a visualization of the theory by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), which is further explained below.

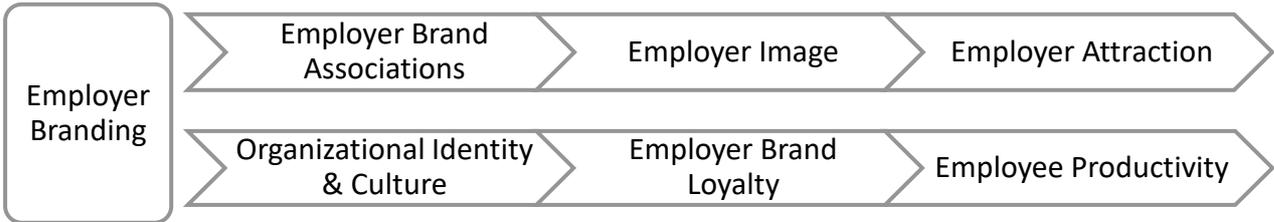


Figure 2: Employer Branding Framework (Backhaus, Tikoo, 2004); self-made visualization

Generally speaking, the employer brand creates two principal assets. On the one hand it creates the employer brand association, which are the thoughts one gets when a certain brand, or in this case employer, is mentioned. This affects the employer image of the company, which is about functional benefits such as salaries and leave allowances, as well as symbolic benefits such as the views about the prestige of the firm. That in turn is the basis for the employer attraction. Meaning this asset has an influence on the opinion of the possible future employee of the company. As the thesis focuses on the influence of the employer brand on the recruiting process, the employer attraction is the most important part for this thesis.

On the other hand, it creates the employer brand loyalty, which is highly affected by the organizational identity and culture of a company. These factors are what decides over the employee productivity (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, pp 504–506). This means, that the way the company's culture and identity are made up has a strong effect on the loyalty of employees towards their employer. A strong loyalty often means a more productive employee.

3.1 Definition of the employer brand

As with recruiting, it is important to know the definition of the employer brand as well. For this sake, some definitions were looked at and compiled within this subchapter.

Employer branding is part of the recruitment process, however it is not just about recruiting. It has a broader scope than that, it affects the way talent is attracted, hired and engaged with. Furthermore, it has an effect on the retention of present employees. The way the company shows itself as an employer to the external world should reflect the internal communication (Garrett 2013).

Since the attraction and retention of talent has become more competitive, HR professionals face the need of developing a more detailed approach to the global talent landscape. Organizations have to weigh their options, starting with which talent pools to use and how to operate their business in order to take advantage of them. Additionally, they need to decide on the lengths they would go to in order to get the top talent to choose them instead of their competition on the job market (Rosethorn 2009, p 12).

The employer brand is not just something a company can quickly develop. It is their reputation as an employer and in order to influence it, companies have to work on it constantly (Shutan 2015, p 31). However, an important realization every cooperation has to make is that they already have a certain employer brand, even if they were not aware of it. As soon as they are an employer, they have a certain reputation, whether that may benefit them or not (Fisher 2013, p 177). This is done by word-of-mouth as well as different social media channels such as Glassdoor.

However, some experts do not believe in the concept of employer branding. They argue that branding is only done for customers, and even though employees are important as well, the fundamental branding efforts go towards the customers. In branding it is important to make sure that customers know the brand exists, which is the so-called brand awareness. After this was ensured, it is necessary to know what is thought of the brand, also known as brand

associations which can be positive and negative. Which is why some say employer branding is not a real discipline, since employers only focus on the positive aspects of their image. They may try to lessen negative perceptions and experiences but that is hard to do with values that are predominantly very positive. Lastly, some argue that branding is supposed to be about uniqueness. Which does not fit with the employer brand, since most companies follow the same set of values (Ritson 2013).

Nevertheless, the employer brand is something that affects job seekers during their search. It has an impact on them whether they are aware of it or not. Companies that do not pay attention to their employer brand could still have a good employer brand without being aware of it, simply because their company culture resonates with job seekers. On the other hand, companies that focus on their employer brand could still have a bad one, because they do not know how to work with it properly. Either way, it affects their recruitment process.

3.2 Employer value proposition vs. employer brand

Since the definition of the employer brand was just explained, the difference between the employer value proposition, short EVP, and the employer brand should be made. These two terms are often confused with each-other, thus it is important to mention the difference between them. The employer brand, as already mentioned, is about a company's overall reputation as an employer. The EVP however, is about the tangible and intangible agreements made within the real, as well as the psychological contract, that is established between employer and employee. Within those contracts, it is clearly stated what both parties expect from and offer each other as soon as the contract is valid (Keohane 2009, p 37).

3.3 Development of the employer brand throughout history

The employer brand did not surface at the same time as human resource management or even recruiting, it came much later. To understand why it is important, one needs to know first where it came from.

Even though the term employer brand has only existed since the 1990s, its origins start some decades earlier. In the 1960s, to be even more exact 1958, recruitment communications became a specialized field. The biggest development could be seen in the UK, where recruitment firms

competed to have advertisements in newspapers. Since space was limited, the decisions were mainly based on image and brand (Rosethorn 2009, pp 3–4).

In the book “The employer brand” Simon Barrow thinks back to when the concept of employer branding first crossed his mind in the 1970s. At that time, he was at an HR-related job for the first time, using the ideas and templates that earlier helped him to be a consumer goods brand manager. To him, the whole concept of dealing with recruiting the same way you would with marketing a good or service seemed so obvious and natural (Barrow & Mosley 2011, p 3).

Simultaneously to this development, another shift in the academic world happened. Brand management got more and more recognition as a legitimate discipline. That was when an organization’s “people dimensions” were acknowledged for the first time. Meaning companies started to acknowledge their employees as a form of customer (Rosethorn 2009, pp 4–5).

However, the development to the employer brand concept we know today did not only happen because of strictly business associated reasons. Another reason was the start of examining the psychological bond between employer and employee in the 1960s. This research led to the term “the psychological contract” being coined. The psychological contract is, unlike the employment contract, unwritten. It acts as the foundation of an employee’s beliefs and behaviors at work. It is a process that happens throughout the whole employment cycle, starting with the recruitment and stretching until the retirement or resignation. It influences the attitude and well-being of the employee (Rosethorn 2009, p 9).

A combination of the employee’s engagement and the psychological contract was used to understand the employer-employee bond, which brought researchers closer to the idea of the employer brand. The concept of the psychological contract was still hard for companies to adopt. In order for it to be implemented, organizations needed to understand what their employees expect from their employers as well as the world of work as a whole (Rosethorn 2009, p 10).

In the mid-1990s the phrase “war for talent” was coined by three McKinsey consultants. Alongside this phrase, the phrase “people are our most important asset” had gained more importance. During recent years, the meaning of the phrase “war for talent” changed. When it was first used, it described the lack of talent supply in the industrialized world as well as in the emerging economies. Later, the meaning changed to describing the lengths companies have to go to in order to attract and retain talent (Rosethorn 2009, p 11).

The term “employer brand” was first coined sometime in the mid-1990s. It was defined as an organization’s public reputation as an employer, instead of the general corporate brand. However, the desire of building a strong employer brand did not become a focus point then, that development happened sometime between 2004 and 2008. The leading companies of that time started to put the same effort on their employer brand as they did on their corporate and consumer brand, due to the growing competition for talent at that time (Mosley 11th of 2015).

Even though this concept has existed for over a decade, it is still not given the attention it should get from many companies. Most marketers only focus on the corporate brand and are completely unaware of their employer brand. They do not realize the great impact of the employer brand on the company and thus it’s corporate brand (Markelz 2016, p 10).

3.4 Importance of the employer brand for companies

This chapter focuses on the importance of the employer brand. It will give the reader an idea of why all businesses should take care of it.

According to Kotler, a company should think of its employees as they think of their customers. Employees are internal customers who, just as external customers, have certain wants that need to be satisfied. By allowing that satisfaction to the employees, their performance can be increased (Kotler 2012, p 148).

To a certain extent, companies have two groups of people they have to reach. On the one side the customers, which obviously is one of the top goals most companies have. On the other hand however, they have to compete for high quality employees. These employees are usually crucial in being able to achieve the goal of reaching many customers and being overall successful. Having the right people working at their company can truly have an enormous difference on the overall performance of a corporation. With an active management of the employer brand, that recognition of the top talent can be earned (Taylor 2016).

The employer brand can help with the hiring process. Companies should use the employer brand in order to show possible future employees what they offer beyond the paycheck (Mansueto Ventures LLC 2018). This way, a good employer brand can benefit the supply of good employees.

3.5 What makes an employer brand good?

There are different approaches and opinions on employer brands. This chapter will focus on what makes an employer brand stand out to employees.

A good employer brand is about more than just earning a lot of money and getting different kinds of monetary benefits from an employer. It is about the recognition and respect an employee feels when talking about the company they work for. They should also have a sense of team work and belonging that they associate with their employer.

Instead of just being drilled to beat the sales numbers from the previous year, employees should have the feeling that their time at a company is contributing to something bigger than that. The company does not have to be a multi-billion giant in order to be attractive for job seekers. That depends on the company's goals as well as the seeker's beliefs. Someone that values social justice might prefer a smaller company which follows social values that align with that person (Taylor 2016).

Companies need to present what they offer in an easily accessible way for possible future employees to find. A good employer brand is what makes the difference between someone wanting a job and someone wanting a job at a specific company (Vitale 2016a).

3.6 How to build a successful employer brand

After reading all the theory about the employer brand, one might ask themselves how to create a beneficial employer brand. This part of the thesis along with its subchapters will hopefully be able to answer that question.

According to Kathy Steele, there are five steps which a company should follow when they want their employer brand to benefit them. She says that in order to be able to attract the top talent, businesses need to put more effort into the employer brand, to allow them to become and stay an employer of choice (Steele 2018). Looking at a study from Deloitte's 2018 Human Capital Report the reason for the importance of creating and maintaining a winning employer brand becomes even more evident. The study showed that from 11,000 asked employers only 30-50% were able to meet the newest and most critical workforce expectations (Deloitte 2018, p 5). Meaning an implementation of these steps can help employers to win the competition for the top candidates.

In the following paragraphs, the theory from Steele will first be explained and afterwards evaluated with the help of further literature.

3.6.1 Know how you rate among the competition

Her first advice is that a company should evaluate how it rates amongst its competition. The first question for this step is whether the company is new to employer branding or already an established employer of choice. The company should also be aware of whether they are being preferred over their competition and how loyal their own employees are.

In order to be a desirable employer, the appropriate mix of employer branding and technology is necessary. It is important to not only have the fun company culture that employees seek, but to also know which channels to use to show it to possible future employees. This can be done in multiple ways. One of them being the right branding of the workspace. Additionally, the job descriptions should be written in an engaging way instead of just listing all requirements and benefits. It could also be beneficial to implement new HR technologies and showing the work culture through social media channels (Steele 2018).

Another way companies can see how they rate amongst their competition is by simply comparing. Seeing how easy, or difficult, it is to get new employees and how much said employees expect to get from the employer, may that be in salary or other kinds of benefits (Taylor 2016).

It is important however, that companies choose their measuring techniques according to their employer brand goal. If the goal and the way of measuring it do not fit together, the company will not be able to find out whether or not they were able to reach it. The Great Place to Work survey is a ready-made survey companies can use to get insights on their employee's thoughts about their employer. Even though the Great Place to Work template is widely used throughout the world to measure employees' thoughts on their employer, it may not always be the best option. The questions are very generic, meaning they may not fit with the goals set for the employer brand (Ritson 2013).

3.6.2 Hire for culture fit

When hiring the candidates should first be evaluated by their fit with the corporate culture and second with their resume qualifications. Creating a "right fit" employee persona beforehand

will help this process. Each persona should differ according to the role they should fulfill, but they should always outline the desired characteristics looked for in a new employee. In order to create these personas, the current employees should be taken into account. It should be determined why these employees are bringing success to the company. With these observations, a list of so-called must-have culture-fit factors and a list of not-a-fit factors can be established. If even more information is desired, an internal employee survey can be done, asking them for their motivations and goals within the company (Steele 2018).

If the company manages to assess the company culture they can use this information to hire people that will bring them long-term growth and success. By choosing a candidate that is able to flourish within the company a lot of time and money can be saved (Bouton 2015, p 4).

However, Patty McCord, who was chief talent officer at Netflix from 1998 to 2012, says that companies should not obsess over the culture fit. Often, the corporate culture fit is confused with sympathy. When hiring they think more about how they would like to be friends with that person rather than the potential benefit they could offer the company. Regardless of the personality, the candidate could still be beneficial to the corporation. It is important to differentiate between the two (McCord 2018, p 92).

3.6.3 Use visual storytelling in job descriptions

The next step is an evaluation of current job postings. To hire top talent nowadays long formal paragraphs are not good enough anymore. Instead they should be made more appealing using photos and videos. When filming the company should make sure to focus on one job only, using one video for multiple positions should be avoided. The video should include a view of the workspace, as well as ideally two interviews about the job. The interview questions should be kept specific in order to keep the video under two minutes. The video should show what is promised instead of just mentioning it. Additionally, it should be authentic and genuine (Steele 2018).

Other experts even go as far as saying that companies should create a virtual reality experience to give an even realer experience of what the job might look like (A. L. 2017).

3.6.4 Create a Millennial-ready experience

In order to attract Millennials, also known as Generation Y, as well as Generation Z talents, a different approach is necessary. Studies show that even though all generations value meaningful work, these two generations are more interested in aspects such as transparency of the company culture. Thus, a different communication style is needed in order to get them engaged. These generations value a certain autonomy, recognition and reward for their work.

The company's website should be able to intrigue potential employees by sharing the inner works of the company. To achieve that, authentic stories of employees should be shared with the target employee audience. Additionally, the company's career page should display the core values as well as the benefits that are offered to employees. Using real photos of the employees working or at community events gives job seekers a deeper look into the company culture.

However, allowing a peek into the culture is not the only aspect when trying to hire Millennials and Gen Z talents. These generations also pay a lot of focus on the application process itself. They evaluate the ease of the company's application process as well as its mobile-friendliness (Steele 2018).

However, when posting on social media, companies should not take on too many channels at once. Moreover, posting the same content on all pages is not an option. Candidates will most probably look at all social media channels a company has, seeing the same content on all of them will not help them when trying to gain insights. Companies need to learn which channel is used by prospective candidates in which way and create their content accordingly instead of recycling the same content on all channels (HR Focus 2015). On the same note, just tweeting about a position or posting information about it in different ways on different social media channels is also not enough. A good online representation of the employer brand means a long term effort (Shutan 2015, p 31).

Other experts agree, that giving a "behind the scenes" look into the company's inner works is important. It can not only give possible future employees a deeper look into the company, it also makes current employees feel appreciated by their employer. Being able to share their experiences using specific hashtags can get them more excited about their work (A. L. 2017). When companies manage to convey, in a genuine way, why their employees enjoy working for them, they position themselves as an employer of choice in the eyes of job seekers (Mansueto Ventures LLC 2018).

3.6.5 View hiring as a team sport

Only involving the hiring manager in the recruiting process is the wrong way to go, according to Steele. She states that the entire team should be involved in the process. This can for example be done by encouraging employees to participate on company review sites. Via websites such as Glassdoor, employees can anonymously leave honest reviews about their employer. Information such as salary reports, company culture and benefits, opinions on the CEO and interviews can be uploaded by users. Additionally, employees should participate in the company's social media efforts. Since 57% of job seekers include social media in their job searching efforts each month, it is important to have a promising social media presence. This can be achieved by getting the employees to share company updates as well as job postings on their personal accounts, most importantly LinkedIn. However, employees should not be expected to write their own posts. Instead they should be provided with branded messages for them to share on their profiles (Steele 2018).

As mentioned earlier, this step does not only help with gaining new employees, but also with the retention of current employees. It shows them that they are important to the company individually (A. L. 2017).

According to a research done by Glassdoor, job seekers value online reviews by current or former employees of a company. These reviews can affect their opinions about the company and intentions to apply for a position. Thus, corporations should be aware of what their employees have to say about them. When a company sees a negative review, they should try to understand and solve the problem internally. Additionally, they could respond to it on the website the review was made at to clear it up, if necessary. With the research, Glassdoor was able to find out that companies that monitor those websites and act upon negative reviews, may have a better chance to recruit a qualified candidate within today's competitive labor market (Melián_González & Bulchad-Gidumal 2017, p 11).

4. Interview with the recruiter

This chapter of the thesis will focus on the interview with a recruiter who works at a recruiting agency. First, the structure of the interview will be explained, followed by the findings of the actual interview and their implication for the thesis.

The interview is important in order to understand a recruiter's thoughts and views on the employer brand and to see whether or not implementing the five steps that were mentioned earlier would make a noticeable difference. The interview itself was through a phone call on the 11th of April 2019.

4.1 Structure of the interview with the recruiter

The following chapter will present the questions the recruiter was asked. In some cases, the reason for asking a particular question will be given as well.

The interview with the recruiter started by asking for a brief introduction of their background. This was an important question, since it shows how much experience they have in recruiting.

Next, the recruiter was asked to state their opinion on the five steps by Steele, especially in regards to recruiting Finnish Generation Z. They were asked to express their thoughts about the following points:

1. Is it important for companies to be aware of how they rate amongst their competition, regarding the employer brand?
2. Is it important for companies to hire for a cultural fit?
3. Is it beneficial for companies to use videos as well as virtual reality to show their work environment?
4. Should companies use their social media to show the work inside the company alongside their products?
5. Is it beneficial to use rating and review websites such as Glassdoor?

Next, the recruiter was asked if there is a noticeable difference between companies that put a lot of effort into their employer brand versus companies that do not. This question should show if there is a noticeable benefit for companies that work on their employer brand.

Lastly, the recruiter was asked what the three most important factors are that candidates look at when considering someone as their future employer.

4.2 Findings from the interview with the recruiter

This subchapter will start with a brief description of the respondent. Afterwards, the answers to the questions about the five steps as well as the additional questions will be stated. Simultaneously, the meaning of the answers for the thesis will be analyzed.

4.2.1 Information about the recruiter

The person that was interviewed, was a female recruiter who has worked in this field for 15 years. First, she worked as an independent recruiter and since November of 2018 she has been working in a recruiting agency. Further information, such as their employer and the recruiter's name will remain anonymous.

4.2.2 Comparing with the competition

The recruiter agreed with the first of Steele's five steps. The respondent said that it is of course very important for a company to know how they rate amongst their competition. She said that she can even see the importance of having that awareness within her own company.

This implies that companies can benefit from research about their and their competitions' employer brand. This offers important information for companies that can be useful for recruiting. Thus, companies should put effort into this step.

4.2.3 Hiring for a cultural fit

The recruiter's opinion on hiring for a cultural fit was somewhat against Steele's theory. According to the recruiter, it is not a necessity to hire a person on the basis of their fit within the company. It is much more important for all employees, may that be new or already existing ones, to work towards creating a harmonized work culture.

“What we do is that we create a common work and employee culture. We do it together in our company and we want to make the culture fit everybody who works in the company.”

This means that companies do not have to put too much focus on the cultural fit whilst looking for a new employee. The work culture should be something that is evolving with time and new hires.

4.2.4 Usage of visual storytelling for recruiting

As for visual storytelling, videos are something that her own company uses a lot on their website and social media to provide a look into the work environment of the company. They advise their customer companies to do the same.

The takeaway from this is that companies should invest time into creating visual material to show and represent their company. These videos can then be part of job descriptions, but they can also be posted on the company's website or social media accounts.

4.2.5 Giving a “behind the scenes” look into the company

According to the recruiter, the employer brand should definitely be shown on social media. She additionally stated that this could be easier for service companies than it is for companies that sell goods. Another way for companies to show the work environment could be to invite people to the company and show them around. This way, a real “behind the scenes” look into the company can be given to interested candidates.

Even if, social media is a good way for companies to share a look into their work environment, it is not the only way. Steele did not only talk about social media when she mentioned a “Millennial-ready experience”. She noted that especially nowadays transparency is craved for by job seekers. It is important for companies to note that this can be done in multiple ways.

4.2.6 Receiving reviews from employees

Within the recruiting agency, they do not use Glassdoor or similar websites. In fact, the recruiter had not heard about Glassdoor prior to the interview. However, they do have their own internal system which they use to receive reviews. Even if the recruiting agency does not use websites designed for the purpose of giving reviews, they still collect them.

The above statement confirms that companies should find some way to hear their employees' opinion on them to solve possible problems. However, according to the recruiter, they do not necessarily have to be shared with the general public.

4.2.7 The influence of the employer brand on recruiting

Next, the respondent said that she can see a big difference between hiring for companies that put a lot of effort into their employer brand versus companies that do not. The quotation below confirms this:

“Of course, I see a big difference. The better the employer brand, the easier it is to find people that are interested in the job.”

This statement alone shows the true importance of the employer brand, and with that its influence on the recruiting process. Additionally, this is what the recruiter said about the employer brand as a whole:

“The brand can give a very big competitive edge and it can be ruined in a few moments.”

Consequently, companies have to work on their employer brand constantly. Issues that arise need to be taken care of immediately, in order to avoid a negative outcome. Additionally, the respondent mentioned that the employer brand is becoming increasingly more important and everybody should engage in working on it. This confirms that the employer brand has a great influence on the recruiting process and should thus be taken seriously.

4.2.8 What job seekers look for in an employer

When the recruiter was asked about what the three most important factors are for future employees when thinking about their employer, the first thing the respondent mentioned was the employer brand. Next, she mentioned the work environment. Lastly, the work flexibility was mentioned and most importantly the possibility to work long-distance, e.g. from home.

Since the employer brand is part of the most important factors, according to the respondent special care has to be taken towards it when creating job announcements:

“What we do when we create job announcements, we really think a lot about the employer brand for our customers.”

Overall, the interview showed how important the employer brand is for a company. It can be truly beneficial and make the recruiting process easier. From a recruiting standpoint, the employer brand should be taken seriously.

5 Interviews with the target employee group

This chapter will focus on individual interviews with people that fit the target employee group. The chapter will start with an overview of the questions the chosen representatives of the target employee group were asked. This will be followed by a short introduction with some data about different respondents. Lastly, the different answers given to the questions will be analyzed.

The interviews were made between the 3rd and 5th of April 2019. Some of them were phone calls, others were face-to-face. The respondents chosen, were all business students at Novia UAS.

5.1 Interview questions for the representatives of the target employee group

The interview was started with some general questions. This was done to get to know the respondents and their background. These questions were important, to show that the interviewed people are indeed part of the target employee group.

1. What year were you born in?
2. What year of your studies are you currently in?
3. Are you already looking for a full-time job?

The next set of questions were about the five steps of Kathy Steele, to see their opinion on the steps. The respondents were asked to think about their thoughts on these questions regarding their future full-time position. It is important to note that the questions were open-questions.

4. Do you compare the job descriptions and different companies?
5. Do you see colleagues as merely professional or do you wish to be close to them?
6. What do you think about companies that use visual storytelling to describe jobs?
7. Do you think a “behind the scenes” look into the company should be shared on social media?
8. Do you think companies should encourage their employees to review them on websites such as Glassdoor?

Lastly, the respondents were asked to mention the three most important things they want their future job to offer them. This was asked, to get a more general view of what this specific pool of respondents value the most regarding their employer and work in general.

5.2 Respondents

The table below offers a quick overview of the respondents. The first three questions were asked to get the information needed for this table. Their identity, however, was kept anonymous.

Table 1: Overview of the respondents

Respondent	Year of birth	Year of studies	Seeking a full-time position?
A	1995	2 nd	Currently only looking for a summer job
B	1997	2 nd	Not applying, but looking at different options
C	1996	2 nd	Currently only looking for a summer job
D	1996	3 rd	Yes
E	1996	2 nd	Not yet
F	1997	3 rd	Not yet
G	1995	4 th	Yes
H	1996	3 rd	Yes

As displayed above, a total of eight Finnish business students were interviewed. They were all born between 1995 and 1997, meaning they are right at the starting point of Generation Z. Younger students were not interviewed, since they should at least be in the second year of their studies. This way, it was made sure that they have experience with applications, even if it was solemnly for internships. Three of the respondents were in the final year of their studies and consequently already looking for a full-time position. Some of the remaining students were

looking for summer jobs, others already had found their internships and summer jobs for this year. The gender of the respondents is not mentioned, since gender is of no importance for the thesis.

5.3 Findings from the interview with the respondents

This subchapter begins with a quick overview of the respondents’ thoughts about Steele’s steps. Afterwards, the different questions asked will be answered. However, not only the answers that were received will be presented, they will additionally be analyzed simultaneously.

5.3.1 Overview of the interview results

The table below gives a short summary of the interview results with the respondents. This should offer an overall understanding of the representatives’ feelings towards Steele’s five steps.

Table 2: Overview of the respondent’s opinion on Steele’s five steps

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>Comparing companies</i>	6	2
<i>Cultural fit</i>	7	1
<i>Visual storytelling</i>	7	1
<i>Sharing “behind the scenes” on social media</i>	7	1
<i>Encourage employees to leave reviews</i>	6	2

The figure above shows the number of interviewed people that agreed or disagreed with Steele’s five steps. If a respondent said that he would do one of the steps, e.g. comparing different companies whilst applying, or that the step would increase the probability for applying, e.g. the usage of visual storytelling, it was determined that they agree with Steele’s thoughts. When looking at the numbers, it is clear that the majority agreed. However, there are for all the steps one to two people who disagreed with them. It is important to note that those were not the same people for all steps.

5.3.2 Comparing companies

The fourth question was used to find out whether or not applicants compare different companies. According to Steele, companies should know how they rate amongst their competition, this question should show if the applicants would even be aware of ratings. Which means that if the target employee group does not compare the different companies, maybe it is not strictly necessary for companies to do so themselves.

Five out of the eight respondents said that they compare the different companies (respondents A, B, C, E and G), mainly to see how they are doing in general. Respondent B's reasoning for comparing the different companies was the following

“To see what they do, how they treat their employees. [...] but really quick, not going into too much of it.”

Representatives D and H said that they do not compare the companies and just apply if they find the job posting interesting. According to respondent D companies should not be compared. They preferred companies to be different from each other, believing that they should show their uniqueness. Lastly, respondent F commented on the following:

“Maybe search information about the company before I have an interview, but not for the application.”

Overall this implies that companies should look out for their competitors and see what and how they are doing. The candidates they want to attract are aware of the differences between companies, so the companies themselves should be as well. However, they should keep their own identity instead of adapting to other companies' strategies.

5.3.3 Company culture

The fifth question was about the culture fit, to see how important a closer connection is to the respondents. By asking what relationship they would like to have with their colleagues, their wish for a cultural fit was investigated. It was assumed that in order to get along on a more personal level, similarities to a certain degree are necessary. Which would in turn mean a culture fit.

Here, seven respondents (A, B, C, D, E, G and H) said that they would like to be able to build a bond with their colleagues in order to have a harmonic work environment. For example, representative B said:

“If there is good communication and good understanding of each other, I can only see benefits from that. Having shared opinions and helping each other to develop and grow.”.

Only one of the respondents, respondent F, was of a different opinion on this topic. To them, it is not a necessity to be closer to their colleagues. This is what they answered to the question:

“Just colleagues, but if we connect than we can maybe become friends outside of work.”.

This means that the target employee group highly values a good work environment. They see a strong connection between being content in their job and getting along with their colleagues. Companies that want their employees to thrive in their work should ensure a good work climate, which can be achieved by hiring according to the company culture.

5.3.4 Visual storytelling

As for the visual storytelling, the respondents were asked directly how the usage of videos in job postings would affect them. This was done to see whether this step would increase the likelihood of the target employee group to apply for a certain position.

Seven of the respondents (B, C, D, E, F, G and H) said that the usage of it would increase the probability of them applying for the position. However, one of those seven, respondent B, said that the overall communication is more important and that they would not apply just because visual storytelling was included in the job description. Respondent D said that they would appreciate being able to see what their future working space might look like. Additionally, representative G responded with the following quotation

“Yes, it is more descriptive and you know what you are getting into. A picture says more than a thousand words and a video says even more. As long as it is done well, it would increase the chance of me applying.”.

The eighth person, respondent A, said that it would be interesting to see, but it would not really affect the probability of them applying for the position.

When the respondents were asked about virtual reality, four of them (B, C, G and H) said that it would increase the probability of them applying for that position. The other four respondents (A, D, E and F) stated that even though it sounds interesting, they find it unnecessary. Additionally, two respondents (F and G) raised the concern of not knowing how to watch the VR video, since they do not own the necessary equipment.

Companies that use visual storytelling in the form of videos within their job descriptions might have a better chance attracting candidates from the target employee group. Companies that want to go the extra mile could even include VR videos. This might be an option for companies that work within the technology industry. Here the chances of the job seekers owning the necessary hardware to look at the videos properly might be higher than in other industries.

5.3.5 Usage of social media for the employer brand

The question about the usage of social media was used to find out how a company that tries to be more transparent is perceived by the target employee group. According to Steele that is something that is important for a good employer brand nowadays.

Seven respondents (A, B, C, D, E, G and H) out of eight said that companies should include a “behind the scenes” look into their company on their social media profiles. They mentioned that it would make the company seem more transparent. Additionally, representative G said it would make them feel as if they belong to something bigger if they work at that company. Below is a quote by respondent D and their positive feelings towards companies sharing their work environment on social media:

“I like that, it makes the company more authentic. I like to see behind the scenes, so I think that is a good thing.”

Only one of the eight respondents (F) had a different opinion on the topic, they said that companies should only show their products on their social media channels.

Generally speaking, however, companies that show more than just their products on their social media channels are preferred by the representatives of the Finnish Generation Z. They could for example let one of their employees post about their work day on their Twitter profile or post about new and old employees on Facebook.

5.3.6 Usage of employer rating websites

The last question about the five steps was used to find out how the target employee group feels about companies that include their employees in their employer branding process. The aim of the question was to find out if they would take the reviews into account when deciding whether to apply or not.

When asked about Glassdoor, most of the respondents did not know about the website, only one of them, respondent G, was familiar with it. After the concept of the website was explained to them, six of the respondents (A, C, D, E, F, and G) said that they think employees should be encouraged to review their employer. They said the opinion of an insider would be appreciated in making a decision to apply for the position. Respondent A said that they also try to see if they know someone that works at the company to ask for their opinion. This shows the need for this target employee pool to receive some insider information about the company they are considering to work for. Respondent E for example said:

“Yes, I think it is good. Then you get more information on what the employees think of their own work.”

Two respondents (B and H), however, mentioned that they would be very skeptical of the reviews. They feared that the reviews might be influenced by the employer and do not state the true opinion of the employee. This is what respondent H said about the topic:

“For me, I do not trust those pages. I always feel like maybe they tell their employees what to write there.”

In order for reviews to work in the favor of companies, it is important that the employees are able to state their opinion freely. As long as the honest opinions of the employees are represented, the target employee group would see a benefit in them.

5.3.7 Three aspects a job should fulfill

Lastly, the chosen representatives of the target employee group were asked to state the three most important things to them in a job. All of them mentioned that they would like to work in a harmonic work environment. Two of the respondents (C and D) said that the working hours matter to them.

Five respondents (B, C, D, F and G) said that they want to do something they enjoy. On that same note, representative C also mentioned that they want to feel that what they do is not unethical in some way, they want to feel comfortable with their work. Moreover, respondent G said that they want to feel proud of their position. They want to feel a certain sense of responsibility within their company.

Three respondents (A, C and F) mentioned that money was important to them. Contrary to that respondent E mentioned that they did not care about the salary as much, the experience would be more important to them.

Respondent G said that they would like to feel proud of their work and also get the chance to climb up the career ladder within the company. Additionally, it is important for them that their employer offers them the chance to go to seminars or receive other types of further education.

Respondent E said they would like to work in an international company, meaning the company should have offices globally. Respondent H said that they want their employer to be professional and show that they value their employees.

6 Conclusion

The conclusion of the thesis starts with a brief summary of what companies should focus on when they want to attract Finnish Generation Z will be made. This will be followed by a suggestion for future research. The conclusion will end with a critical look on the thesis and its' validity.

6.1 Recommendation for recruiting Finnish generation Z

Generally speaking, the empirical research made it clear that Steele has a valid point with her five steps. Companies that follow those should see an improvement in their recruiting. The different thoughts on what the representatives want their future occupation to be, will be compiled.

When talking to the respondents and the recruiter, one aspect was very clear. Harmony within their workplace and team is highly valued. This means companies need to make sure their employees get along with each other. However, this does not necessarily mean that they all

have to have the same personality or interest. Harmony at the workplace can also be achieved by ensuring a supportive and open work environment.

Another aspect to consider would be using visual storytelling in the job postings. This can, as mentioned earlier, either be an interview with employees or a video of the workspace. This highly visual approach to job postings can potentially increase Generation Z interest in a position.

Additionally, the majority of the respondents said that they look at a company's social media presence when deciding what to apply for. The recruiter also supported this approach for their clients. This means, companies should try to not only show their products but also themselves as an employer.

Moreover, the reviews on companies on websites such as Glassdoor are highly valued by this employee pool. Companies should try to encourage their employees to rate them honestly. This will help the job seekers to make a decision. Additionally, an internal archive of reviews could be helpful to ensure a better work environment.

The last three mentioned aspects show that this target employee group clearly seeks a look inside the company in order to help them make a decision. They want to know what the company itself, as well as working inside the company, would be like. Thus, companies should try their best to give a clear picture of what they offer.

6.2 Suggestion for future studies

In future studies, the leveraging effect of the employer brand on the recruiting process could be explored further. The recommendations that were made to recruit Finnish Generation Z could be tested. For this purpose, a test could be conducted in which two job postings, one that follows the recommendations and one that is just a plain description of the job, are created. Then, these two could be tested on the target employee group to see which announcement is preferred. This way, one would be able to see their feelings and opinions towards the different aspects used.

6.3 Critical view on the research

It is important to note that the thesis should be viewed critically. The interview with the recruiter should have been more strictly geared towards Generation Z. A clear distinction between the recruitment process of different generations is missing.

Overall, it is hard to say when a certain Generation of employees ends and when the new one begins. These two lines might be blurred, especially at their end or starting points. Consequently, some of the respondents might represent the values of the previous Generation more than the one they are classified as based on their year of birth.

Additionally, the responses of the respondents could have been affected by their personality or other factors as well. Basing all their opinions simply on the generation they were born into should be refrained from. There are multiple factors that can influence people. One should be careful of stereotyping.

Furthermore, the opinions stated above are only of eight people. Even if, the respondents mostly had similar opinions, there might be others that feel differently about the topics. As with all topics, it is important not to stereotype. Just because the interviewed people had certain opinions, it does not mean that everyone that falls into the category of Generation Z shares the same beliefs.

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