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WP2 RESEARCH REPORT



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Introduction to the report

The WP2 Research Report consists of three sections, each highlighting the actions conducted within the Re-Crew second Work Package. The first part, "Selection and Analysis of User Cases," thoroughly examines desk research combined with an in-depth analysis of relevant literature. This section explores foundational principles about resourcing practises, social responsibility, workplace health and wellness, and employer branding. Furthermore, the publication includes comprehensive analyses of surveys and interviews conducted with entrepreneurs, human resources specialists, and consultants. The methodology, analysis, and findings are comprehensively elucidated.

Transitioning to the subsequent part, titled "Stakeholder Consultation," the report presents a comprehensive record of the precise implementation of focus groups conducted in all nations involved in the project. This text expounds upon the implementation of the focus groups. It presents an extensive examination with distinct findings related to the project's core themes, namely the interaction between resourcing activities in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), employer branding strategies, and social responsibility.

The concluding part of the WP2 report presents a compilation of 12 case studies and best practices. These case studies serve as examples of how organisations effectively allocate resources towards activities that encompass social responsibility, health and wellbeing initiatives, talent management, external communication, company fit considerations, and employer branding strategies.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction and research methodology.....	7
1.1	Purpose and objectives of the activity.....	7
1.2	Methodological approach.....	7
1.3	Organisation of the report.....	7
2	Literature review.	8
2.1	Recruitment process.....	8
2.1.1	<i>Definition.</i>	8
2.1.2	<i>The recruitment process over time.....</i>	8
2.1.3	<i>The recruitment process after COVID-19.....</i>	9
2.1.4	<i>Recruitment phases.....</i>	9
2.1.5	<i>The recruitment process of small enterprises.....</i>	10
2.1.6	<i>Conclusions.....</i>	10
2.1.7	<i>References.....</i>	11
2.2	The external environment in the recruiting process.....	11
2.2.1	<i>Supply and Demand.....</i>	11
2.2.2	<i>Labour market.....</i>	12
2.2.3	<i>Goodwill and image of the organisation.....</i>	12
2.2.4	<i>Political-Social- Legal Environment.....</i>	13
2.2.5	<i>Unemployment rate.....</i>	13
2.2.6	<i>Competitors.....</i>	14
2.2.7	<i>References.....</i>	15
2.3	Social responsibility policies.....	16
2.3.1	<i>Impact on onboarding.....</i>	16
2.3.2	<i>The European Pillar of Social Rights.....</i>	16
2.3.3	<i>Examples of various social responsibility policies.....</i>	18
2.3.4	<i>References.....</i>	28
2.4	Workplace mental health and well-being.....	29
2.4.1	<i>Essentials of the workplace mental health and well-being.....</i>	29
2.4.2	<i>Protection from Harm.....</i>	29
2.4.3	<i>Conclusion.....</i>	30
2.4.4	<i>References.....</i>	31
2.5	Talent management.....	32
2.5.1	<i>Talent planning.....</i>	32
2.5.2	<i>Attracting talent.....</i>	32
2.5.3	<i>Retaining talents.....</i>	33
2.5.4	<i>Developing talents.....</i>	33
2.5.5	<i>Changes in talent management due to the COVID-19 pandemic.....</i>	34
2.5.6	<i>References.....</i>	34
3	Research findings.....	35
3.1	Findings from the interviews.....	35
3.1.1	<i>Overall recruitment policies in small companies.....</i>	35
3.1.2	<i>Consideration of HRM trends and changes due to the COVID pandemic.....</i>	35
3.1.3	<i>Typical recruitment activities in small companies.....</i>	35
3.1.4	<i>Attracting job seekers in small companies.....</i>	36
3.1.5	<i>Selection of employees in small companies.....</i>	36
3.1.6	<i>Onboarding of new employees in small companies.....</i>	37
3.1.7	<i>Building an image of an attractive employer.....</i>	37
3.1.8	<i>Social responsibility measures for better employer brand.....</i>	37

3.2	Findings from the quantitative survey.....	38
3.2.1	<i>Recruitment practices in small businesses.</i>	38
3.2.2	<i>Social responsibility integrated into recruitment policies.</i>	39
3.2.3	<i>Employer branding in small companies</i>	40
3.2.4	<i>Relationships between employer branding, recruitment practices and social responsibility.</i>	43
3.2.5	<i>Summary of findings.</i>	44
3.3	Key conclusions of empirical research.....	46
3.4	References.	46
4	Attachments.....	48
4.1	Analysis of the interviews	48
4.2	Questionnaire for the quantitative survey.	62
4.3	Questionnaire for the interviews.....	65
5	Summative findings	71
5.1	Greece.....	72
5.2	Spain	72
5.3	Slovenia.....	73
5.4	Denmark	74
5.5	Italy	74
5.6	Norway.....	75
6	Case study: Social responsibility policy (Spain).....	78
6.1	Introducing the Company	78
6.2	What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	78
6.3	960-pixel Communication: Social Responsibility Policy.....	78
6.4	References	79
7	Case Study: Health and well-being at the workplace (Spain).....	80
7.1	Introducing the Company: El Azafrán	80
7.2	What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	80
7.3	Grupo Azafrán’s Health and Well-Being	80
7.4	References	81
8	Case study: Talent Management (Italy).....	82
8.1	Introducing the Company.	82
8.2	What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	82
8.2.1	<i>The different phases</i>	83
8.2.2	<i>Strengths and Achievements</i>	83
8.2.3	<i>Conclusions</i>	84
8.3	References	84
9	Case Study: Health and well-being in the workplace (Italy).....	85
9.1	Introducing the Company: Mediaset Italia	85
9.2	The goals of the case study and the stakeholders.....	85
9.3	The actions taken by Mediaset to promote employee welfare and well-being.....	86
9.4	References	87
10	Case Study: External Communication (Slovenia)	88
10.1	Company description	88
10.2	Human Resources Activities	88
10.3	Practises for Corporate Social Responsibility	89
10.4	Employer brand-strengthening strategies.....	89

11	Case Study: Finding Company Fit (Slovenia)	91
	11.1 Description of the Company	91
	11.2 Overview of the hiring procedure	91
	11.3 Employer branding strategies.....	93
12	Case study: Recruitment process (Greece)	94
	12.1 Introducing the Company	94
	12.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	94
	12.2.1 <i>The hiring and recruiting processes</i>	95
	12.2.2 <i>APIVITA's internal Grading system and training</i>	96
	12.3 References	98
13	Case Study: Social Responsibility Policy (Greece)	99
	13.1 Introducing the Company: Papastratos.....	99
	13.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	99
	13.3 Papastratos' Social Responsibility.....	99
	13.4 References	100
14	Case study: Talent Management (Norway)	101
	14.1 Introducing the company - FuglesangDahl	101
	14.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	101
	14.2.1 <i>The different phases</i>	101
	14.2.2 <i>Strengths and Achievements</i>	102
15	Case Study: Finding the Company Fit (Norway)	103
	15.1 Introducing the company: NTE	103
	15.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	103
	15.3 Strengths and Achievements	104
	15.4 References	104
16	Case Study: Recruitment Process (Denmark)	105
	16.1 Introducing the Company	105
	16.2 The Challenge: Efficient Recruitment Across Borders for Micro-Companies.....	105
	16.3 Conclusion.....	106
17	Case Study: External Communication (Denmark)	107
	17.1 Introducing the Company	107
	17.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?	107
	17.3 How was it done?	108
	17.4 Conclusion.....	109
	17.5 References	110

PART 1: Initial Research Report

WP2 – ACTIVITY 2.4

Selection and analysis of user cases.

1 Introduction and research methodology.

1.1 Purpose and objectives of the activity.

The research aims to identify the areas of interest among HR professionals, consultants, SMEs support organisations, and entrepreneurs and link the findings with the relevant literature. The areas of interest include HR practices in small companies, especially the ones related to resourcing. In the research, the key area of resourcing will be investigated from several points of view, such as employer branding, social responsibility, and the changes due to the COVID pandemic.

1.2 Methodological approach.

The research was conducted in three steps. In the first step, desk research was implemented as a literature review. Then, the topics were divided among partners and collected in this report.

In the second step of the research, a series of interviews were conducted among consultants in the HR area and internal experts in the area of HR. Altogether, 39 individuals were involved in the interviews (6 from Denmark, 6 from Greece, 7 from Italy, 13 from Spain, 3 from Slovenia and 4 from Norway). The collected data was stored in an online application available [HERE](#). The interviews were conducted between December 28, 2022, and March 6, 2023. The questionnaire used in the interviews was developed based on a previously shown literature review.

In the third step of the research, a qualitative online survey was conducted in all project countries. An online tool of 1KA One-click Survey was used to execute the survey. The questionnaire was developed based on the findings from the interviews. The survey was conducted between February 1, 2023, and March 14, 2023. Altogether, we received responses from 84 individuals (11 from Denmark, 21 from Greece, 10 from Italy, 17 from Spain, 20 from Slovenia, and 5 from Norway). For statistical analysis, we used SPSS software. Several statistical methods were applied, including descriptive statistics (calculation of mean values and standard deviation), the Kruskal-Wallis test for checking the difference in responding between the countries, as well as correlation analysis and linear regression analysis for testing the relationships between recruiting practices, social responsibility measure in the HR function and employer branding. The raw analysis results of the data in the 1KA application are available [HERE](#).

1.3 Organisation of the report.

The report is organised into three parts. The literature review or the desk research findings are available in the first part. This part is divided into subchapters that refer to individual partner work.

The empirical research findings are available in the second part of the report. This part is divided into two subchapters. The first one includes the results based on the interview analysis. In the second subchapter, the findings of the qualitative survey are contained.

In the last part of the report, several attachments contain data and descriptions of the analysis used in either the qualitative or quantitative portion of the empirical research.

2 Literature review.

2.1 Recruitment process.

2.1.1 Definition.

Taking its origin from the historical war, the term Recruiting refers to the selection and recruitment of personnel that can be conducted by the company itself or outsourced to an external employment agency. In the latter case, human resources professionals search for and select candidates by interfacing with the sector managers where the candidates will be placed. Therefore, the objective of recruiting is to follow the candidate's recruitment process from the launch of the job offer to the actual deployment of the personnel in the company.

2.1.2 The recruitment process over time

The recruitment process goes back a long way. As early as the third century, the Han dynasty emperor in China used to select civil servants by assessing their knowledge, intellectual abilities, and moral integrity. Passing to an earlier period, the first evolution of the recruiting process¹ came during the industrial revolution. At that time, the exponential rise of large factories combined with new production methods and the radical increase in population intensified the need to 'recruit' new human resources. During the First World War, in Germany, a tool was used for the first time, and it became firmly established in the world of selection: The Assessment Centre. The Assessment Centre is an evaluation methodology that uses various tests (such as exercises, tests, and assessments) to find out whether candidates, in specific situations, possess the personal skills and competencies required for a particular job position. Initially, this method was used to recruit new soldiers in the German army. Still, it was later transferred to the civilian sphere as well. From 1940 onwards, England used this method to select administrative employees and the United States for the internal evaluation of employee potential. From 1950 to 1980, there was a shift from an approach based exclusively on subjective criteria, set by the recruiter himself, to a competence-oriented approach that sought to make the process as objective as possible. However, these two approaches turned out to be too unbalanced. For this reason, in the 2000s, companies began to move towards a new way of approaching selection that was somewhere in between the subjective and the objective method. Indeed, today, recruiters focus on a mix of technical, behavioural, and potential skills of the individual because only these can ensure the success of companies over time with effective responses to the demands of society.

The way of looking for work has also changed: In the 1990s, this process significantly differed from the personnel selection we know today. Then, companies and recruitment companies used to buy space in newspapers, and candidates could apply by sending their CVs by post or fax. The companies received the CVs and proceeded to contact the most suitable candidates. Digital tools have gradually replaced this approach, including social media (such as LinkedIn and Indeed) and web portals.

¹ <https://www.risorseumane-hr.it/reclutamento-e-selezione/>

2.1.3 The recruitment process after COVID-19

An important aspect is to analyse how the recruitment process changed during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to an official EU study entitled ‘How COVID-19 radically changed selection processes’², the pandemic has led to profound changes in the world of work, particularly in selection and recruitment processes.

Virtual job interviews are the new normal.

Virtual job interviews were only used as a last resort before the pandemic. Indeed, face-to-face interviews were preferred, so some recruiters rescheduled or cancelled an interview rather than do it online. However, many employers realise virtual selections are more efficient and represent the way forward. Online job interviews save time and money for both employer and candidate and make the selection process quick and effective. On the one hand, each candidate knows precisely when their interview will start, limiting unnecessary waiting. Still, on the other hand, there is less direct contact, which is more reliable and constructive.

Location is no longer a crucial factor.

Thanks to new labour policies that are much more flexible than before, companies have access to an ever-wider pool of candidates, allowing them to choose the most suitable person for the position required.

The labour market shows a transformation in demand.

Due to the uncertainty created by the pandemic, job seekers are more likely to apply for positions in larger, more stable companies that can provide secure employment. Other sectors, however, have experienced substantial growth, such as IT.

Companies must generate the interest of job seekers.

Companies must now actively ‘sell’ themselves to job seekers to stand out by offering increasingly popular benefits such as flexible working, health and wellness packages and sick leave policies.

2.1.4 Recruitment phases

PHASE 1 - Job Analysis³

First, it is necessary to make an in-depth internal analysis of the company to identify the job profile you want to look for in the labour market. In this sense, job analysis makes it possible to analyse a specific job position's characteristics, requirements and methodologies using various techniques.

PHASE 2 - Publication of job offer.

As mentioned, the job analysis clarifies the job position you want to seek. The next step is to create a clear and effective job advertisement without making mistakes that would waste the company's time and money.

PHASE 3 - Curriculum screening

² https://eures.ec.europa.eu/how-covid-19-has-fundamentally-changed-recruitment-2021-10-13_it

³ <https://hunity.it/recruiting/>

At this stage, the recruiter has to skim the resumes received and decide which, among all those analysed, are worthy of a personal interview.

PHASE 4 - Candidate Placement

The chosen candidate is introduced to the company in this last phase, and the 'Onboarding' phase begins. By this term, we mean the process by which the new employee acquires all the skills, information, knowledge, and behaviour to become part of the company.

2.1.5 The recruitment process of small enterprises

Whether a small company or a large multinational, the recruiting world is changing fast. Therefore, it becomes crucial for a recruiter to be continuously updated on the latest trends and resources. Additionally, knowing the latest strategies and tactics will be essential to find and recruit the best candidates on time.

The recruitment process changes depending on the size of the company for several reasons⁴:

First of all, large companies have a human resources department dedicated to recruitment or, in any case, they have the economic strength to delegate this task to an external company; on the other hand, small companies very often have no one in charge of this task, and for this reason, it is the entrepreneur himself who has to carry out this difficult work. Small business owners thus have to take on too many responsibilities at once and make choices alone and in a brief time. The most common mistakes he might commit are:

- ineffective recruitment resulting from an incorrect or incomplete description of the job offer,
- incorrect grading of employees based on the real needs of the company,
- inconsistent policies or practices that have not been updated,
- lack of necessary documentation (they prefer to speak only verbally),
- insufficient training for the new employee, especially in the first months of their onboarding.

2.1.6 Conclusions

As we have seen, the recruitment process is to be considered of fundamental importance for any company. However, as far as small companies are concerned, which have more difficulties in this area, the ideal solution could be either to invest in human resources to ensure recruitment in line with their needs or to train themselves in HR to be able to make the right decisions in an informed and confident way. Recruitment refers to identifying, attracting, interviewing, selecting, hiring, and onboarding employees. In other words, it involves everything from identifying a staffing need to filling it:

- Identify the hiring need.
- Devise a recruitment plan.
- Write a job description.
- Advertise the position.
- Recruit the position.
- Review applications.

⁴ <https://academyque.com/che-aspetto-hanno-le-risorse-umane-in-una-piccola-impresa/>

- Phone Interview/Initial Screening.
- Interviews.
- Applicant Assessment.
- Background Check.
- Decision.
- Reference Check.
- Job offers.
- Hiring.
- Onboarding.
-

In HRM practice, several types of recruiting may be identified, such as

- Internal.
- Retained or contingency recruiting.
- Staffing recruiting.
- Outplacement recruiting.
- Reverse recruiting.

2.1.7 References

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- [2] <https://academyque.com/che-aspetto-hanno-le-risorse-umane-in-una-piccola-impresa/>
- [3] <https://www.risorseumane-hr.it/reclutamento-e-selezione/>
- [4] https://eures.ec.europa.eu/how-covid-19-has-fundamentally-changed-recruitment-2021-10-13_it
- [5] In-Recruiting, Applicant Tracking System – Recruiting Software “The recruiting Dictionary.”
- [6] <https://www.smartrecruiters.com/resources/glossary/recruitment/>

2.2 The external environment in the recruiting process

Recruitment is one of the essential tasks the HR management department must perform very carefully. They have to understand the need for the vacant position. They have to know the qualifications of the candidate for the required position, etc. There are some factors which are influencing recruiting efforts done by HR management. Every organisation has to engage in recruiting activities. It is an overly complex task, and we will summarise external factors influencing the hiring process.

These are identified external factors:

1. Supply and Demand.
2. Labour Market.
3. Goodwill / Image of the organisation.
4. Political-Social- Legal Environment.
5. Unemployment Rate.
6. Competitors.

2.2.1 Supply and Demand

The availability of the workforce, both within and outside the organisation, is an essential determinant in the recruitment process. If the demand for the applicant is high and the applicant's supply is deficient, the organisation will not meet the requirements of the position. Therefore, supply and demand are the factors which are influencing the recruitment of any organisation. If there is a considerable supply of applications for a vacant position, the organisation can fulfil it to their desired

standard. And suppose the supply of the application for any vacant position is low. In that case, the human resources management department of the organisation has to get ready to negotiate the applicant's demand and look forward to a good salary and other benefits packages.

Suppose the company has a demand for more professionals, and there is a limited supply in the market for the professionals demanded by the company. In that case, the company must depend upon internal sources by providing special training and development programs.

Undoubtedly, fundamental shifts are taking place in the labour market. The pandemic has accelerated pre-existing trends, such as automation and digitisation, flexible and remote work, and the growing mismatch between employers' needs and the skills available in the workforce. The most immediate result is the widespread talent shortages felt by organisations up and down the countries.

2.2.2 Labour market

Employment conditions in the community where the organisation is located will influence the organisation's recruiting efforts. For example, if there is a surplus of the workforce at the time of recruitment, even informal attempts at the time of recruiting, like notice boards displaying the requisition or announcement in the meeting, etc., will attract more than enough applicants.

The labour market is one of the constant factors influencing the recruitment efforts of any organisation made by the human resources management department. Suppose the labour market, where an organisation is established, is not as big as they need. In that case, the organisation has to look forward to bringing labour from other places, giving some extra benefits, and providing housing and other required things. On the other hand, if there is a good flow of labour in the organisation's market, the human resources management will not put any extra effort into recruiting the position.

According to a survey conducted among staffing and recruitment professionals, almost 50 % of the respondents indicated a talent shortage impact on the labour market as the main challenge for staffing firms in 2022. COVID-19-related effects on jobs remained a significant issue, with just over 40% of respondents citing this as their main challenge.

What is more remarkable, though, is the rate at which people leave their jobs to find new ones. In a recent survey, McKinsey's global research found that the percentage of people who left their job without a new position was around 40%. Moreover, for those still speculating about quitting, the proportion of those considering it without a new job offer was even higher, at 60%. The implication of these trends is clear: Employees are re-evaluating their relationships with their employers, and many are not liking what they see. In some cases, work demands have significantly risen due to the pandemic, leading to increasing burnout levels— a trend that pre-dates the pandemic. In others, working arrangements during the pandemic had raised hopes of newfound flexibility, which may have been dashed. For example, in the United Kingdom, data from the Office for National Statistics show that in January 2022, fewer than 20% of employees in the United Kingdom worked in businesses that intended to use homeworking as an ongoing part of their business model.

2.2.3 Goodwill and image of the organisation

The organisation's image is another factor influencing the organisation's recruitment process. This can work as a potential constraint for recruitment. An employer with a positive image and goodwill

finds attracting and retaining employees easier than an organisation with a negative image. The image of a company is based on what the organisation does and is affected by the industry. Managerial actions like good public relations and rendering public services like building roads, public parks, hospitals, and schools help earn image or goodwill for the organisation.

The size of an organisation is one factor that influences the recruiting efforts made by human resources management. An organisation with one hundred thousand employees will find itself recruiting potential applicants much more often than one with one hundred employees. Big organisations with many employees will find a massive pool of applicants when they need to fill a vacant position. Conversely, an organisation with fewer employees must outsource or advertise for the vacant position. A small organisation finds it more difficult to attract applicants than a bigger one. The overall size of the organisation is one factor affecting the recruitment efforts made by the HR management department for any organisation.

Also, statistic displays the average time-to-hire for job applicants worldwide in 2017, broken down by company revenue. During the survey, the average time-to-hire for companies with an annual income of less than five million US dollars was 41 days. More minor the income - the longer the hiring process.

One of the other significant factors influencing recruitment is the employment conditions and the community where the organisation is located. For example, if the organisation is located in a remote area where people are not highly educated, and they are good with their business will not get suitable applicants from the location rather than the organisation which is located in the area where people are educated and are suitably qualified for the positions of the organisation. If the unemployment rate is low and people are getting highly paid for their job, it is hard for a new organisation to find applicants with their requirements. The effectiveness of past recruiting efforts will show itself in the organisation's historical ability to locate and keep people who perform well.

2.2.4 Political-Social- Legal Environment

Various government regulations prohibiting discrimination in hiring and employment directly impact recruitment practices. For example, the Government of India has introduced legislation for reservation in employment for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, physically handicapped etc. Also, trade unions play an important role in recruitment. This restricts management's freedom to select those whom it believes would be the best performers. If the candidate cannot meet the union's criteria, union regulations can restrict recruitment sources. The environment of the organisation is also an influencing factor for recruiting. An organisation has a sound political, social, and legal environment. If an organisation has an excellent political climate, it can attract many candidates. The organisation should have a good social image. They have to pursue social and ethical policies. An organisation should have the least legal cases against them. The HR management department of an organisation with an excellent political, social, and legal environment will attract a good and desired candidate.

2.2.5 Unemployment rate

One factor that influences the availability of applicants is the growth of the economy (whether the economy is growing or not and its rate). When the company is not creating new jobs, there is often an oversupply of qualified labour, leading to unemployment. Therefore, the unemployment rate plays a significant role in influencing recruiting efforts. Any organisation's HR management must

consider the unemployment rate influencing recruitment. HR management has to look after the unemployment rate of the area where the organisation is located; if the unemployment rate is high, human resource management will easily find a suitable candidate with a lower salary. Their HR management has many options for recruitment. They will get many applications with high qualifications and do not have to negotiate the salary with the candidate they offer. They do not have to give extra benefits to the employees. But if the unemployment rate is low where the organisation is located, it will be big trouble for its human resources management. In such a situation, human resources management will not find the option in the form of an applicant and must pay more than they deserve. Human resources management has to compromise with the candidate's qualifications, knowledge, and experiences. They have to offer them a benefits package. The unemployment rate is one of the crucial factors influencing recruiting efforts.

According to the Bank of England's long-term statistics, starting in 1948, unfilled vacancies as a proportion of the UK's total labour force were already elevated pre-pandemic. In 2019, the average vacancy rate was 2.4%, compared to the 70-year long-term average (from 1948 to 2018) of 1.5%. Such tight labour market conditions reflected record levels of employment as well as increasingly pressing skills mismatches. Now, sometime after the COVID-19 pandemic, labour shortages appear even more acute. Comparing two measures of labour market conditions—the unemployment rate and the vacancy rate—shows that the fourth quarter of 2021 was the first period since detailed records began in 2001 when the vacancy rate—an indicator of labour shortages—overtook the unemployment.

2.2.6 Competitors

The competitors' recruitment policies also affect the organisation's recruitment function. To face the competition, many times organisations have to change their recruitment policies according to the policies being followed by the competitors.

Competitors always look forward to growing up and having quality employees who can maximise their profit margin and growth rate. Competitors are one of the factors influencing recruiting efforts made by the HR department of any organisation - how to see the offers the competitors give for the positions they are looking for. HR management has to constantly update their knowledge regarding the offer and benefit to the applicant. So that they can offer more or can be able to negotiate with the candidate regarding the salary and benefits packages for the opening position; in many organisations, candidates with the knowledge and experience of their competitors' preferences of many organisations used to hire or fulfil the positions of their competitors by that, they can be able to go through the strategy and plans of their competitor organisation. They can try to overcome their drawbacks.

We need to mention the newest trend - quitting trend. People are switching jobs and industries, moving from traditional to nontraditional roles, retiring early, or starting businesses. They take time out to tend to their personal lives or embark on sabbaticals. The Great Attrition has become the Great Renegotiation. Competition for talent remains fierce. However, the barriers to switching employers have dropped dramatically for specific categories of workers. In the United States alone, there were 11.3 million open jobs at the end of May – grown substantially from 9.3 million available jobs in April 2021. Even as employers scramble to fill these positions, the voluntary quit rate is 25% higher than pre-pandemic levels. At the current and projected pace of hiring, quitting, and job creation, openings likely will not return to normal for some time. Like their global peers, Europeans think more about leaving, exacerbating a high job vacancy rate and a skills gap.

The analysis, which includes a survey of more than 16,000 respondents in nine European countries, shows that one-third of respondents expect to quit their jobs in the next three to six months. While that slice of the workforce is lower than the 40% in our global survey from April, it is a remarkably high churn rate for Europe, where labour protections and cultural factors — not to mention a [likely economic slowdown](#) — tend to favour remaining in a job. So, companies that believe attrition is a problem limited to the United States should understand that one in three workers may quit soon.

Yet high attrition is just one of the challenges facing European employers. The job vacancy rate doubled to 3% in June 2022 from 1.6% in June 2020, making it harder for companies to fill open positions. Organisations also face a skills gap across industries; many retirees are unlikely to return to the workforce.

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2.3 Social responsibility policies

Social responsibility policies in European businesses outline a company's commitment to operating ethically and sustainably that considers the impact of its operations on society and the environment. Many European companies have adopted corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies to demonstrate their commitment to social and environmental issues and to address stakeholders' expectations, such as employees, customers, and investors.

Some examples of CSR policies in European businesses include initiatives related to environmental sustainability, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions or conserving water and energy. Other CSR policies may focus on diversity and inclusion, ethical business practices, or supporting local communities.

2.3.1 Impact on onboarding

Social responsibility policies can have several impacts on hiring processes within a company. Some companies may incorporate their social responsibility values into their hiring criteria, either by explicitly stating these values in job descriptions or by using them to evaluate candidates during the hiring process. For example, a company that values sustainability may prioritise candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to environmental protection in their work history.

Incorporating social responsibility values into hiring can help a company ensure that its workforce is aligned with its mission and values and can also be a way to attract and retain top talent who are drawn to organisations that share their values.

On the other hand, some companies may take a more formal approach to integrate social responsibility into their hiring processes by implementing diversity and inclusion policies. These policies may outline specific goals and targets related to diversity and inclusion and may require the company to track and report on its progress in meeting these goals. By prioritising diversity and inclusion in hiring, a company can create a more representative and inclusive workforce, which can have several benefits, including improved decision-making, innovation, and employee satisfaction.

2.3.2 The European Pillar of Social Rights.

The European Parliament, The Council, and The Commission proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017 at the Gothenburg Summit. The Pillar sets out 20 fundamental principles representing the beacon guiding us towards a strong social Europe that is fair, inclusive, and full of opportunity in the 21st century. An important aspect of the key principles and action plan is maintaining and improving one of the world's highest standards in working conditions and broad social protection. Those key principles are concrete initiatives that institutions, national, regional, and local authorities, and other businesses shall look to when writing or upgrading workplace policies.

The principles' first two chapters are devoted to (1) *equal opportunities and access to the labour market* and (2) *fair working conditions*.

1. Education, training, and life-long learning

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training, and life-long learning to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successful transitions in the labour market.

Related Commission action: [European Skills Agenda](#)

2. Gender equality

Equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men must be ensured and fostered in all areas, including regarding participation in the labour market, terms and conditions of employment and career progression.

Women and men have the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

Related Commission action: [Gender equality strategy](#), [Pay transparency proposal](#)

3. Equal opportunities

Regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public. Furthermore, equal opportunities for under-represented groups shall be fostered.

Related Commission action: [EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#)

4. Active support for employment

Everyone has the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects. This includes the right to receive support for job search, training, and re-qualification. In addition, everyone has the right to transfer social protection and training entitlements during professional transitions.

Young people have the right to continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship, or a job offer of good standing within 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.

Unemployed people have the right to personalised, continuous and consistent support. In addition, the long-term unemployed have the right to an in-depth individual assessment at the latest 18 months.

Related Commission action: [Youth Employment Support package](#), [Effective Active Support to Employment \(EASE\)](#), [Action Plan for the Social Economy](#)

5. Secure and adaptable employment

Regardless of the type and duration of the employment relationship, workers have the right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions, access to social protection and training. The transition towards open-ended forms of employment shall be fostered.

Following legislation and collective agreements, the necessary flexibility for employers to adapt swiftly to changes in the economic context shall be ensured.

Innovative forms of work that ensure quality working conditions shall be fostered. Entrepreneurship and self-employment shall be encouraged. Occupational mobility shall be facilitated.

Employment relationships that lead to precarious working conditions shall be prevented by prohibiting the abuse of atypical contracts. In addition, any probation period should be of reasonable duration.

Related Commission action: [Initiative to improve the working conditions in platform work](#)

6. Wages

Workers have the right to fair wages that provide a decent living standard.

Adequate minimum wages shall be ensured in a way that provides for the satisfaction of the needs of the worker and their family in the light of national economic and social conditions whilst safeguarding access to employment and incentives to seek work. In-work poverty shall be prevented.

All wages shall be set transparently and predictably according to national practices and respecting the autonomy of the social partners.

Related Commission action: [Proposal for a Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages](#)

7. Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals

Workers have the right to be informed in writing at the start of employment about their rights and obligations resulting from the employment relationship, including on probation period.

Before any dismissal, workers have the right to be informed of the reasons and be granted a reasonable notice period. In addition, they have the right to access effective and impartial dispute resolution and, in case of unjustified dismissal, a right to redress, including adequate compensation.

8. Social dialogue and involvement of workers

The social partners shall be consulted on developing and implementing economic, employment and social policies according to national practices. They shall be encouraged to negotiate and conclude collective agreements in relevant matters while respecting their autonomy and the right to collective action. Where appropriate, agreements concluded between the social partners shall be implemented at the level of the Union and its Member States.

Workers or their representatives have the right to be informed and consulted in good time on matters relevant to them, in particular on the transfer, restructuring and merger of undertakings and collective redundancies.

Support for the increased capacity of social partners to promote social dialogue shall be encouraged.

9. Work-life balance

Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way.

10. Healthy, safe, and well-adapted work environment and data protection

Workers have the right to high protection of their health and safety at work. Workers have the right to a working environment adapted to their professional needs, which enables them to prolong their participation in the labour market. Workers have the right to protect their personal data in the employment context.

Related Commission action: [EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027](#)

2.3.3 Examples of various social responsibility policies.

Workplace policies

Workplace policies are guidelines, rules, and procedures established by an employer to ensure employees' safety and well-being and establish a fair and productive work environment. These policies can cover a wide range of topics, including:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Harassment and discrimination

- Health and Safety
- Use of company equipment and resources
- Performance expectations and evaluations
- Leave policies (e.g., vacation, sick leave)

It is vital for employers to communicate their workplace policies to employees clearly and to enforce them consistently to maintain a positive and professional work environment.

<p>Attendance</p> <p>An attendance policy addresses various issues related to attendance, such as tardiness, early leave, and absence without advanced notice. Attendance policies typically define these terms and describe or point to disciplinary actions. For example, an organisation might define tardiness as arrival over five minutes after the start of a shift or the end of lunch and go on to describe a progressive discipline scheme.</p>	<p>Harassment</p> <p>Harassment is a term that broadly refers to actions that cause others to feel belittled or threatened. A workplace harassment policy defines harassment and may provide examples. This kind of policy usually addresses both harassers and the harassed, pointing to disciplinary action and suggesting avenues for recourse.</p>	<p>Equal opportunity</p> <p>Equal opportunity is an anti-discrimination policy that prevents employers from mistreating employees or job candidates based on age, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, or other personal attributes. This policy is essential because it promotes fair treatment of all individuals by both managers and colleagues. It also allows an organisation to comply with federal regulations issued by U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.</p>	<p>Health and Safety</p> <p>Health and safety policies aim to prevent illnesses and injuries in the workplace. For example, these policies may require employees to wash their hands regularly and provide instructions in a food service setting. They are also likely to describe protocols for using potentially hazardous equipment, such as deep fryers, meat slicers, knives, and other common kitchen tools.</p>
<p>Security</p> <p>A security policy relates to the physical safety of the people in an organisation, or the information found in an area within a facility. Security policies typically outline procedures for entering and exiting the workplace or a room inside the building. For</p>	<p>Cybersecurity</p> <p>Cybersecurity relates to the protection of an organisation's networks and digital property. Cybersecurity policies often address various areas of concern, including but not</p>	<p>Acceptable use</p> <p>An acceptable use policy is a set of rules that dictate the appropriate use of an organisation's computer network and devices. This can be seen as an extension of both cybersecurity and the code of conduct. For example, such</p>	<p>Bring your own device.</p> <p>Bring your own device, also known as BYOD, refers to the practice of allowing employees to use their personal computing devices, including mobile devices, for work. This is an extension of acceptable use, as personal devices could potentially increase</p>

<p>example, it may note using an ID card or fingerprint scanner and qualify the types of personnel permitted entry into classified areas.</p>	<p>limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Password strength - Password changing - Use of personal computing devices - Identifying illegitimate emails and attachments - Copy and transfer guidelines for digital files. <p>Measures such as these helps prevent undesirable events such as data loss and compromise.</p>	<p>policies often prohibit behaviours such as downloading certain file types, uploading unauthorised files to the network and certain forms of communication via email or messaging applications.</p>	<p>cybersecurity risks. BYOD policies usually include restrictions concerning uploading to the company network and requirements relating to antivirus software.</p>
<p>Social media</p> <p>A social media policy, commonly considered another acceptable use extension, dictates how and when employees can access their personal social media accounts during work hours. For example, many employers might worry that browsing social media could cause a decrease in productivity, so social media policies often restrict access to certain times, such as breaks. These policies may also limit what kinds of employer-related information employees share to prevent leaking sensitive information.</p>	<p>Privacy</p> <p>A company's privacy policy defines how much it collects employee data and monitors employee activity. For example, a typical privacy policy informs employees of the collection of certain types of personal information— addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers—that are necessary for documentation. It also may note that company correspondences are subject to monitoring but ensure employees of their right to privacy concerning their personal belongings,</p>	<p>Paid time off</p> <p>Paid time off, also known as PTO, refers to vacation days, personal days, and holidays during which the employee continues to earn their regular compensation rate. A PTO policy usually mentions how many vacation and personal days an employee has, how these days accrue and how many holidays per year the organisation acknowledges. The policy might also address what happens when one of these holidays falls on the weekend, or employees do not use all their vacation</p>	<p>Sick leave</p> <p>Some employers have a sick leave policy separate from the PTO policy. Sick leave refers to days away from work due to illness or injury. Salaried employees typically receive paid sick days, while hourly employees usually do not receive compensation for sick days. A sick leave policy typically includes the number of days allowed per year. In addition, it outlines associated protocols, such as acquiring a doctor's note or finding a colleague to cover your work.</p>

	personal correspondences, and conversations.	days during a business year.	
<p>Leave of absence</p> <p>A leave of absence, or LOA, is an extended period away from work. This differs from PTO because of the length of the time off and the various circumstances under which an employee might request leave. There are two categories of leave—paid and unpaid—and numerous types, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parental leave is for those who have recently had a child through either birth or adoption. - Bereavement: Bereavement leave applies to individuals who have recently experienced the death of a loved one. - Medical: Medical leave is for individuals who have ongoing severe medical conditions or are responsible for caring for someone who does. <p>An LOA policy typically notes the types of leave the organisation allows, the time permitted, and adjustments to the compensation rate, if any.</p>	<p>Flexible work</p> <p>Flexible work policies refer to allowances for employees working outside the traditional work environment and schedule—9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in a central location such as an office. Examples of flexible work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work-from-home or remote: The employee may work part of the time or entirely from a remote location, usually their residence. - Flex time: On a given day, the employee may arrive and leave as they wish, with the understanding that they meet the required number of hours per day or week. - Compressed schedule: The employee works longer hours per day but fewer total days per week—typically 10 hours per day for four days. 	<p>Code of conduct</p> <p>A code of conduct policy relates to employee behaviour. This kind of policy commonly addresses issues a broad range of issues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate and inappropriate manners of dress - Confidentiality about company activities or projects - Interpersonal relationships and behaviours - Intoxication on the job - The use of communications devices or social media during work hours <p>A code of conduct policy may also warn against infractions of the policy, noting that violations may lead to disciplinary action. These policy aspects help others understand the issues' seriousness and encourage adherence to the policy.</p>	<p>Payroll</p> <p>A payroll policy is an assurance to employees concerning their compensation. In the policy, the employer guarantees payment of wages or salaries on a specified date or regular interval. It often also includes mention of deductions such as federal and state taxes.</p>

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Environmental policies

Environmental policies are guidelines, rules, and regulations that are put in place to protect the environment and natural resources. These policies can address a wide range of environmental issues, including:

- Air quality
- Water quality and management
- Waste management and recycling
- Biodiversity and habitat conservation
- Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions
- Use and management of natural resources (e.g., forests, minerals).

These policies aim to preserve and protect the natural environment from harm while supporting the sustainable use of natural resources.

The following list below contains examples of statements that can be used as a checklist or inspiration for businesses to help them draft an environment policy appropriate to their business activities:

- Comply with environmental legislation and other requirements, such as approved codes of practice.
- Importance of environmental issues to your business.
- Assess the environmental impact of all historical, current, and likely future operations.
- Continually seek to improve environmental performance, e.g., by doing a regular walk-around survey of your business to see if you are using energy and water efficiently and whether measures to reduce waste and pollution are effective.
- Reduce pollution, emissions, and waste, e.g., emissions from transport, oil leaks and spills, excessive noise, heat, or vibration generated by your business activities.
- Reduce the use of all raw materials, energy, and supplies.
- Raise awareness, encourage participation, and train employees in environmental matters.
- Expect similar environmental standards from all suppliers and contractors.
- Assist customers in using products and services in an environmentally sensitive way.
- Consult with the local community.
- Participate in discussions about environmental issues.
- Communicate environmental aims and objectives to employees and external stakeholders.
- Agree to commit to environmental principles and continual improvement at the highest level in your business.

Businesses might set up general programs and plans or promote specific behaviour amongst employees, such as:

<p>Recycling Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small businesses can get started with a kick-off campaign to educate employees about 	<p>Energy Conservation Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses can allow a professional energy rater to audit their energy 	<p>Promote Telecommuting and Carpooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Companies can implement telecommuting and carpooling 	<p>Reduce Product Packaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses that produce products requiring plastic or Styrofoam packaging can take
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<p>the benefits of recycling, its goals, and methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium- to large-size companies might consider hiring a part-time recycling coordinator or enlisting the help of a staffer who would enjoy helping the business contribute to a cleaner environment. - Companies should post measurable goals and objectives in a central location to increase employee motivation. Even environmentally apathetic employees might participate if collection containers are conveniently located throughout the building. 	<p>usage and offer advice on reducing waste, saving money, and minimising their environmental impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses can get a quick start on energy conservation by changing all incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs and encouraging employees to shut down and unplug computers and other equipment before leaving for the day. - Owners should consider swapping out old wall insulation if the building is older for more modern and efficient materials. 	<p>policies to encourage employees to reduce fuel consumption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some companies reward employees who commit to carpooling with discounts to local fitness clubs or other green businesses. - Employees whose duties do not require their constant presence at work, such as some executive assistants, human resources staff or computer network managers, can telecommute. - Companies with telecommuting employees typically provide a laptop or desktop computer and pay for necessary services, such as a dedicated phone line and Internet connectivity. 	<p>steps to reduce this packaging and its contribution to overfilling of landfills by switching to biodegradable packaging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative packaging may make products more attractive to a consumer base increasingly demanding environmentally friendly products.
<p>Complying with all applicable environmental legislation and sustainability commitments</p>	<p>Measuring and analysing the carbon footprint of our business activities in conjunction with other climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts</p>	<p>Preventing pollution and reducing consumption of resources through waste management strategies that promote waste minimisation re-use, recovery, and recycling, as appropriate</p>	<p>Incorporating energy efficiency measures into the firm's facilities and promoting efficient energy use in all areas of business activity</p>
<p>Promoting and</p>	<p>Adopting a</p>	<p>Ensure our staff are</p>	<p>Promoting the</p>

<p>continuing to invest in technologies that provide alternatives to business travel</p>	<p>procurement programme which considers the environmental impact of products and services and supports the purchase of sustainable products.</p> <p>Use lifecycle assessment in new product design and on existing products to help us understand the impacts of our products on the environment and identify opportunities to reduce this impact.</p>	<p>aware of the environmental impacts of their work activities and encourage them through regular awareness and training to minimise those impacts.</p>	<p>protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystems through employee awareness programs and stakeholder engagement</p>
<p>Pursuing a programme of continuous improvement by reviewing our Environmental Management System and related objectives and targets, policies, and practices</p>	<p>Embed environmental risks into our wider risk identification and mitigation processes</p>	<p>Refresh our materiality assessment periodically, which includes considering current and future environmental issues</p>	<p>Engage with our suppliers to reduce environmental impact</p>
<p>Provide relevant information and advice, e.g., to our consumers and customers on the environmental impacts of our products.</p>	<p>Externally report our environmental performance annually</p>	<p>Work in partnership with others to scale up action on environmental issues worldwide, e.g., through private sector groups and coalitions.</p>	<p>Locally sourced food for staff and guests</p>

Marketplace policies

Marketplace policies are guidelines, rules, and regulations put in place by the owners or operators of a marketplace (such as an online marketplace or a physical market) to govern the transactions that take place within the marketplace and ensure the fair treatment of all participants. These policies can cover a wide range of topics, including:

- Seller eligibility and registration requirements
- Prohibited or restricted items
- Pricing and payment policies
- Customer service and dispute resolution
- Privacy and data protection
- Intellectual property rights
- Advertising and marketing rules

Marketplace policies are designed to create a fair and trustworthy environment for buyers and sellers to interact and to protect the integrity of the marketplace. Therefore, it is essential for marketplace operators to communicate their policies to all participants clearly and to enforce them consistently.

A company can build a solid foundation of trust amongst customers, stakeholders, partners, and employees by publishing transparent, honest, and inclusive marketplace policies.

Some of the topics that should be considered are as follows:

<p>Data entry and management: Establish guidelines for customer data entering into a CRM system, including data accuracy, completeness, and security rules.</p>	<p>Access and security: Establish rules for who has access to customer data in the CRM system and establish protocols for protecting this data from unauthorised access or misuse.</p>	<p>Customer interactions: Establish guidelines for how customer interactions should be tracked and managed in a CRM system, including phone calls, emails, and meetings.</p>	<p>Sales and marketing: Establish guidelines for how a CRM system should manage sales and marketing efforts, including lead generation, customer acquisition, and follow-up.</p>
<p>Data analysis and reporting: Establish guidelines for how a CRM system should be used to analyse customer data and generate reports that provide insights into customer behaviour and preferences.</p>	<p>Training and support: Establish a plan for training employees on using a CRM system and establish protocols for providing ongoing support and resources to ensure they are proficient in using it.</p>	<p>Review and update: Establish a process for regularly reviewing and updating the CRM policies and procedures to ensure they are relevant and effective.</p>	<p>Payment: Establish guidelines for when payment is expected (date), charges and interest rates for late payments, forms and methods of accepted payment, online payment options, deposit policy etc.</p>
<p>Communication: Establish a guideline for how to use social media, email, and other digital platforms to communicate with customers and stakeholders</p>	<p>Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): Establish a plan for how you want your business to be visualised on the internet.</p>		

Community policies

Local community policies are guidelines, rules, and regulations put in place by companies to govern their interactions with and impact the local community in which they operate. These policies can cover a wide range of topics, including:

- Community engagement and involvement

- Environmental protection and sustainability
- Social responsibility and philanthropy
- Employee involvement in the community
- Partnerships with local organisations and businesses
- Support for local economic development.

Local community policies aim to foster a positive relationship between the company and the community and ensure that the company is a responsible and contributing community member. Local community policies can take many forms, from formal policies and procedures to informally established practices and values. Therefore, companies need to engage with and listen to the needs and concerns of the local community to develop effective and meaningful policies.

<p>Community service program: A formal program through which a company commits to giving back to the community includes paying employees to volunteer off-site to increase employee engagement.</p> <p>By clearly defining the policies of their community service program, companies can ensure that it is well-organised, well-supported, and effective in positively impacting the community.</p>	<p>Innovation program: Includes setting up programs or funds for donating to local/regional innovation initiatives that have the potential to help the community grow.</p>	<p>Youth program: Establish plans and methods for supporting youth work and activities, such as sponsoring local sports teams, establishing a talent grant, funding sports and culture events, etc.</p>	<p>Ethical Trade and Human Rights: It details how the company ensures that the people and communities providing the products and services they buy, and sell are treated fairly and that their fundamental human rights are protected and respected.</p>
<p>Promoting diverse suppliers: Actively making the supply chain more diverse by reaching out to people from groups who have been under-represented - simultaneously unlocking innovation, agility, and opportunity – within suppliers’ businesses.</p>	<p>Future workforce: Working with like-minded partners and governments to create employment skills in people from 15 to 24 years old. To help them find and keep meaningful work. And to encourage them to take a purposeful approach to their future.</p>	<p>Promoting Culture: Establish plans and methods for supporting cultural activities and growth in society.</p>	<p>Sustainable livelihoods: Supporting the community to build greater resilience and more sustainable livelihoods. To focus the social investment in support of the sustainability aims.</p>

Company values

Definition: Clear company values and rules, communication of values and rules to internal and external stakeholders, and training employees on the importance of values and rules.

<p>Responsibility, Excellence, and Innovation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Siemens Mobility Global 	<p>Customer Trust, Change, and Performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volvo Group 	<p>Creativity, Imagination, Learning, Fun, and Quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LEGO 	<p>Respect, Professionalism, Perseverance, and Integrity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ericsson
<p>Passion, Integrity, and Discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daimler AG 	<p>Honesty, Integrity, and Respect for People.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shell Global 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We create value by having a patient-centred business approach. 2. We set ambitious goals and strive for excellence. 3. We are accountable for our financial, environmental, and social performance. 4. We provide innovation to the benefit of our stakeholders. 5. We build and maintain good relations with our key stakeholders. 6. We treat everyone with respect. 7. We focus on personal performance and development. 8. We have a healthy and engaging working environment. 9. We optimise the way we work and strive for simplicity. 10. We never compromise on quality and business ethics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Novo Nordisk 	<p>Respect, Achievement, Renewal, and Challenge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nokia Corporation

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2.4 Workplace mental health and well-being.

2.4.1 Essentials of the workplace mental health and well-being.

Centred on the worker voice and equity, these five Essentials support workplaces as engines of well-being. Each Essential is grounded in two human needs shared across industries and roles. Creating a plan with all workers to enact these components can help reimagine workplaces as engines of well-being. Below, five essentials for workplace mental health and well-being are explained.

2.4.2 Protection from Harm.

The first Essential of this Framework is Protection from Harm. This Essential rests on two human needs: **safety and security**. Workplace safety means all workers are in a safe and healthful work environment, protected from physical harm, injury, illness, and death. This is done through continued efforts to minimise occupational hazards, physical workplace violence, and psychological harm such as bias, discrimination, emotional hostility, bullying and harassment. Security builds on safety, including financial and job security, given the adverse effects of layoffs and job loss on workers and their families.

Components:

- Prioritise workplace physical and psychological safety.
- Enable adequate rest.
- Normalise and support mental health.
- Creating norms and policies that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and programs of Work-Life Harmony.
- Connection & Community.

The second Essential is **Connection and Community**. Organisations that create opportunities for social connection and community can also help improve health and well-being. This Essential rests on two human needs: *social support* and *belonging*.

Components:

- Create cultures of inclusion and belonging.
- Cultivate trusted relationships.
- Foster collaboration and teamwork.

Work-Life Harmony

The third Essential is Work-Life Harmony. Professional and personal roles and responsibilities can together create work and non-work conflicts. Integrating work and non-work demands rests on the human need for *autonomy* and *flexibility*. Organisations that increase worker autonomy, or how much control one has over their work, and whose workplaces provide greater flexibility, or the ability to work when and where is best for them, see workers who are more likely to succeed in retaining staff for longer.

Components:

- Provide more autonomy over how work is done.

- Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible.
- Increase access to paid leave.
- Respect boundaries between work and non-work time.

Mattring at Work.

The fourth Essential is Mattring at Work. It rests on the human need for *dignity* and *meaning*. Dignity is the sense of being respected and valued. When the dignity of workers is affirmed and supported in the workplace, it enhances well-being. Conversely, being made to feel disrespected or not valued may increase stress and feelings of anger, cynicism, hostility, and withdrawal. Meaning in the workplace can refer to the broader purpose and significance of one's work.

Components:

- Provide a living wage.
- Engage workers in workplace decisions.
- Build a culture of gratitude and recognition.
- Connect individual work with organisational mission.

Opportunity for Growth.

The fifth and final Essential is Opportunity for Growth. This Essential rests on the human needs of *learning* and *accomplishment*. Learning is the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills in the workplace, which provides opportunities for individual intellectual, social, professional, and emotional growth. Learning helps workers meet deadlines and reach work goals while promoting healthy social interactions. Workers can feel stagnant, frustrated, and ineffective without learning or working towards shared goals. While learning is the process of growth, accomplishment is the outcome of meeting goals and having an impact. Accomplishment confers a sense of competence that reduces stress, anxiety, and self-doubt. When organisations create more opportunities for learning, accomplishment and growth, workers become more optimistic about their abilities and enthusiastic about contributing to the organisation.

Components:

- Offer quality training, education, and mentoring.
- Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement.
- Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback.

2.4.3 Conclusion

Workplace well-being relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and the work organisation. Measures for workplace well-being aim to complement occupational safety and health measures to ensure workers are safe, healthy, satisfied and engaged at work.

- Give workers more control over how they do their work.
- Increase the stability of workers' schedules.
- Provide employees with opportunities to identify and solve workplace problems.
- Encourage managers in your organisation to support employees' personal needs.
- Take steps to foster a sense of social belonging among employees.

2.4.4 References.

- [1] <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/workplace-well-being/index.html>
- [2] <https://hbr.org/2021/10/7-strategies-to-improve-your-employees-health-and-well-being>

2.5 Talent management.

Due to various external factors such as persistent skill shortages, changing demographics, work-life balance concerns, increase in diversity, increased globalisation, emerging economies and increase in knowledge workers, talent planning and talent management strategies should have been adjusted during the last decade (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010). Consequently, the following overall directions should be considered in companies:

- Talent should be targeted at all levels, not just 20 per cent of top performers.
- Developing multiple value propositions is crucial because there is no longer a single way of selling the employer brand.
- Rotating talent across a company's units is beneficial for businesses.
- HR should have a more decisive influence on business strategy.
-

Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference in organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the long term, by demonstrating the highest levels of potential (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010).

Talent management is a subset of HRM focusing on your most valuable employees (*How the Pandemic Has Changed Talent Management*, n.d.). It is a methodically organised, strategic process of getting the right talent onboard and helping them grow to their optimal capabilities while keeping organisational objectives in mind (*What Is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models | Spiceworks*, n.d.). It is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010) or a comprehensive and integrated set of activities to ensure that the organisation attracts, retains, motivates and develops the talented people it needs now and in the future.

2.5.1 Talent planning.

Talent planning refers to a combination of HRM processes employers use to recruit and retain talent. These processes aim to create and maintain a high-performing workforce and are typically tailored to the needs and overall objectives of the business (*7 Steps to Successful Talent Planning | Davidson Morris*, 2022). Talent planning means identifying the gaps in the human capital requirements and formulating job descriptions for the necessary vital roles to help guide sourcing, selection and developing a workforce plan for recruitment initiatives) (*What Is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models | Spiceworks*, n.d.).

There are three approaches identified in practice – exclusive, inclusive and hybrid. A complete approach to talent management focuses only on high performers and critical positions for succession planning, which usually means forming only one talent pool. On the other hand, the inclusive approach assumes that there are talents at all levels, which generally leads to multiple talent pools (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010). Talent pools are dynamic since business needs and talent supply change. Assigning an employee to a talent pool creates expectations for the employees, and not delivering those expectations may lead to employee frustration. A strategic talent management approach informs the qualitative and quantitative HR forecast to align closely with the organisation's business direction.

2.5.2 Attracting talent.

Talents are in demand, so a thorough consideration is needed on how to attract them. Becoming an

»employer of choice« means creating a strong employer brand. Multiple value propositions showing a range of opportunities for employees may significantly contribute to attracting talented individuals (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010).

A strong employee brand influences the creation of a psychological contract between the company and employees, setting up employees' expectations. Of course, it is crucial to fulfilling those expectations since talent management strongly influences brand performance. Besides, the brand could be damaged by any mismatch between the brand identity, employees' perception of the brand, and its reputation (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010).

In attracting talents, several channels may be used, such as job portals, social networks, and referrals, and as already said, employer brand also plays an important role. Selection procedures applied in talent management are the same as general HRM selection practices, such as written tests, interviews, group discussions and psychometric testing, and in-depth analysis of all available information (*What Is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models | Spiceworks*, n.d.).

2.5.3 Retaining talents.

A reward is a critical issue if an organisation is to retain talent. Two types of talent are identified in the literature, requiring different reward strategies. »High performers« now contribute to the success of an organisation at the very moment, and »high potentials« are expected to be key contributors in the future. For the first talent group, a competitive financial reward is crucial; however, for the second group, since they are less attractive to the competitors, the use of intrinsic rewards together with bonuses or long-term incentives would be more appropriate. Pilbeam and Corbridge (2010) summarised that a new mindset is required to challenge the reward strategy for talented individuals. In (*What Is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models | Spiceworks*, n.d.), the following examples of rewarding talented individuals are listed: promotions and increments, offering growth opportunities, encouraging involvement in special projects and decision-making, training for more evolved roles, and rewards and recognition programs.

It is necessary to analyse the reason for this to prevent the loss of talented individuals. The literature identifies push and pull factors. Push factors relate to less desirable dimensions of a job or organisations pushing employees to search for another job, such as a level of pay, supervision, the potential for progression, lack of training opportunities, limited availability of flexible working, absence of employee voice mechanisms, etc. On the other hand, pull factors are the ones that make an employer more attractive, such as a desirable working environment, convenient geographical location, range of employer's benefits, or employer brand (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010).

2.5.4 Developing talents

Membership in a talent pool creates expectations of structured, individualised, and formal development processes (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010). The practices may include, e.g., onboarding programs, opportunities for enhancing skills, aptitude, and proficiency, enabling growth through counselling, coaching, mentoring and job-rotation schemes (*What Is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models | Spiceworks*, n.d.).

From an organisation and employee brand maintenance viewpoint, transitioning is essential. The activities related to this aspect may include providing retirement benefits, conducting exit

interviews, and effective succession planning (*What Is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models* | Spiceworks, n.d.)

2.5.5 Changes in talent management due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The use of technology and mobility significantly impacted how talented people are managed in an organisation and how the work is done. At least three significant changes happened during the last three years (*How the Pandemic Has Changed Talent Management*, n.d.):

The pandemic has accelerated the geographical dispersion of talent through technology and remote work. Before the pandemic, an organisation would bring talent to work; nowadays, an organisation may take work to talent. Through technology, an organisation can take work to a talented person, develop that person, and retain that person.

Employees, especially the talented ones, have more control over their work now - how and where they work. Talented individuals, either high-potential employees or high performers, can control the interaction and conversation and dictate the terms. Employers are now the ones who are listening.

Before the pandemic, the organisational culture had been people together in meetings and the same buildings. However, this view of the culture has been disappearing recently. The pandemic has proven that we can and must build culture from living rooms and home offices across the country. Leaders can focus on building culture anywhere by refraining from micromanaging, getting over the politics of presentism, and learning to measure what each employee produces and contributes to the organisation with as much objectivity and data as possible. Above all, by nurturing trust and fairness in employee relationships, leaders can upgrade the company culture even in a virtual-only world (Frankiewicz & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020).

2.5.6 References.

- [1] *7 Steps to Successful Talent Planning* | Davidson Morris. (2022, August 14). <https://www.davidsonmorris.com/talent-planning/>
- [2] *How the Pandemic Has Changed Talent Management?* (n.d.). Pace University New York. Retrieved 20 December 2022, from <https://www.pace.edu/news/how-pandemic-has-changed-talent-management>.
- [3] Frankiewicz, B., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2020, October 13). The Post-Pandemic Rules of Talent Management. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/10/the-post-pandemic-rules-of-talent-management>
- [4] Pilbeam, S. (2010). *People resourcing and talent planning: HRM in practice* (4. ed.). Harlow [u.a.]: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- [5] *What is Talent Management? Definition, Strategy, Process and Models* | Spiceworks. (n.d.). Retrieved 20 December 2022, from <https://www.spiceworks.com/hr/talent-management/articles/what-is-talent-management/>

3 Research findings.

3.1 Findings from the interviews.

3.1.1 Overall recruitment policies in small companies.

The analysis explores the recruitment process in small companies and the various approaches used for staff recruitment. The first part of the analysis discusses the methods used for recruitment, which include online portals, employment agencies, external recruiters, internships, collaboration with universities, and training centres. The companies also rely on their employees for referrals and social media platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook. The approach used for recruitment varies based on the skills required, the number of employees, and the need analysis.

The second part of the analysis explores who manages staff recruitment in the company. For example, external HR consultants, employment agencies, or internal services such as the CEO, COO, HR managers, and hiring managers manage the recruitment process. In addition, the director, business secretary, and department manager engage in the selection process in smaller companies.

Overall, small companies use a combination of approaches for recruitment and rely on internal and external resources for hiring. The recruitment process is flexible and varies based on the specific requirements of the job position.

3.1.2 Consideration of HRM trends and changes due to the COVID pandemic.

Based on the analysis findings, small businesses have changed their resourcing process due to the COVID pandemic. The use of IT technology has increased, and online interviews are conducted more frequently than before, even if people are based in the same city. The companies have adopted different interview platforms such as Zoom and MSTeams and are using more technological tools to reach out to candidates and meet with them. Remote work has also increased, and a two-phase selection process has been implemented, which includes written offers/requests, interviews via Zoom, and a 60-minute interview for promising candidates. However, personal data protection has become a more significant concern due to increased billing and personnel turnover.

To keep up with recruitment trends and adopt the latest strategies and tactics, small businesses are turning to in-house or external HR specialists who manage the training and updating of companies in this regard. Some companies hire external recruitment consultants and attend career fairs to stay updated with the latest recruitment trends. As a recruitment agency, companies regularly update employment practices by cooperating with external specialised agencies, applying a digitally supported selection process, collaborating with universities and career centres, and attending career fairs. The use of online platforms, such as LinkedIn, and activities and collaboration with other companies in the sector have also increased.

Overall, small businesses have been adapting to the changing environment caused by the COVID pandemic and are leveraging IT technology to keep their resourcing activities running. The focus has been on employer branding and using measures to reach candidates effectively.

3.1.3 Typical recruitment activities in small companies.

Based on the analysis, small companies acquire candidates through job postings, screening, 2-3 interviews, and online tests. They seek open-minded, reliable, precise candidates, eager to learn and contribute and possess computer knowledge, languages, and more specific studies adapted to the

position. The candidates' geographic location is also considered, as the preference is to recruit locally or nationally, and cultural fit and curiosity are highly valued. In addition, the companies expect the candidates to be flexible and available, willing to learn, able to collaborate, responsible, highly professional, and digitally literate.

Small companies also tend to focus on candidate retention, as it can be more challenging for them to retain candidates due to the highly competitive market. Therefore, they offer a relaxed and familiar environment, monetary bonuses for achieved goals, and greater labour flexibility. Management and HR departments try to motivate staff weekly and individually. Small companies tend to assign more demanding tasks and design additional rewards to retain exceptionally talented individuals. However, small companies do not have a systematic talent management plan, and only more talented employees are given extra work and involved in more demanding job posts.

However, the role of employment seekers seems to become increasingly crucial in resourcing, primarily due to competition and lack of workforce. This means that small companies must consider the job seekers' expectations. Regarding the sectors and industries that new job seekers prefer to be employed in, IT, marketing, environmental improvement sectors (consulting and engineering), pharma, banking, and stable sectors are desirable. Moreover, job seekers prefer larger companies, the public sector, and organised, inclusive, and international companies.

The expectations of job seekers today are not only about the wage but also the development expectations and working environment (material and non-material). The candidates seek flexible work practices, work from home, adequate technical support, free days, training, progress, and learning opportunities. They also seek stable employment rather than constant change, as they would in large and multinational companies.

3.1.4 Attracting job seekers in small companies.

Based on the analysis, smaller companies can attract new employees by using various methods to inform the public and potential job seekers about their staffing needs. These methods include advertising through employment agencies, sharing information on social media and online platforms such as LinkedIn and job boards, collaborating with external associations, posting posters, and announcing vacancies in local media.

Additionally, smaller companies can improve their image as attractive employers by providing good working conditions, competitive salary policies, training opportunities, free days, and frequent team bonding activities. They can also maintain a positive online image by having a straightforward website, updating social media pages, presenting the company's work, and participating in contests. Moreover, some smaller companies offer new technologies and I+D, publish activities, organise sports events, and select Recruitment Ambassadors among colleagues to attract new employees. Finally, smaller companies can attract new employees by offering attractive compensation packages, fostering a positive work environment, and maintaining a solid online presence.

3.1.5 Selection of employees in small companies.

Based on the analysis, it seems that smaller companies conduct candidate selection through a combination of screening, interviews, and tests. Of course, the exact process can vary from company to company. Still, most companies conduct a pre-selection based on CVs received, followed by one or more interviews (either online or face-to-face), and often include psychometric testing and

knowledge tests as part of the selection process.

It is also interesting to note that smaller companies focus more on quality than quantity, meaning they may have more selection steps and take more time to get to know the candidates. This may include acquainting the candidate with different sectors of the company and their managers in depth. Additionally, some smaller companies may execute psychological tests or special assignments for key personnel such as managers and experts.

Overall, the selection process for smaller companies is designed to achieve quality and evaluate risks.

3.1.6 Onboarding of new employees in small companies.

Based on the analysis, small companies take different approaches to ensure new employees become familiar with the company and acquire the necessary knowledge and behaviour. For example, some companies provide extensive training, including on-the-job training and information on policies, technical infrastructure, quality, and ISO procedures. In contrast, others rely on more informal training in the field and encourage teamwork and social interaction to create cohesive and well-functioning teams.

In many cases, small companies assign a mentor, tutor, or a designated person to whom new employees can turn if they have any questions about their conditions or functions. Some companies also prepare induction programs for new employees, organise training courses, and provide video content to help new employees learn the organisation, rules, and instructions.

In addition, some companies use welcome kits/letters to provide new employees with all the valuable tools for the job and interactive guides on the various sectors and history. However, organising employees' first days in small companies can be challenging, especially when no HR area exists in a company. Therefore, relying on external consultants to take care of the onboarding process can be helpful as employees are supported in their first steps in the company.

3.1.7 Building an image of an attractive employer.

Based on the analysis, small companies take care of their image as attractive employers by providing good working conditions, competitive salaries, training opportunities, frequent team bonding activities, and offering a hybrid work model. They also maintain their online image by having a clear and straightforward website and regularly updating their social media pages. Additionally, small companies offer new technologies and I+D that others may not have and participate in contests to select the best employer. They also organise various initiatives among employees, such as sports events and have chosen Recruitment Ambassadors among their colleagues.

However, it is essential to note that small companies have limited resources and prioritise hiring project managers first. In the future, they would like to structure a communication area that can promote job opportunities in cooperation with the recruiting manager. Small companies also ensure they apply national and contractual rules and do not overlook respect for people's needs and health.

3.1.8 Social responsibility measures for better employer brand.

Based on the analysis provided, small companies can implement various social responsibility

measures to make themselves more attractive to job seekers. These measures include workplace policies that promote flexible working hours, work-life balance, autonomy at work, and prevention of discrimination. Additionally, smaller companies focus on providing health and well-being benefits to their employees, including health insurance, reimbursement of public transport expenses, and job coach services.

Ergonomics is another aspect that can be emphasised to attract job seekers. For example, home office setups and other ergonomic arrangements can promote employee well-being and satisfaction. In addition, social inclusion and non-discrimination policies can make small companies more attractive to job seekers. This can include employing disabled people and promoting diversity and inclusion.

Moreover, promoting volunteering, involvement in the local community, and environmental awareness can also be considered. This includes implementing environmental procedures, recycling events, and applying for sustainability certifications such as ISO14001. Other policies that make a small company more attractive to job seekers include promoting a plant-based cantina lunch, clear communication of the company's services and offerings, and providing institutions and companies with low-cost educational products.

To summarise, small companies can take various social responsibility measures to make themselves more attractive to job seekers. These measures include providing workplace policies that promote work-life balance, health and well-being, autonomy at work, and prevention of discrimination, as well as focusing on environmental awareness and community involvement.

3.2 Findings from the quantitative survey.

3.2.1 Recruitment practices in small businesses.

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. ⁵
Job analysis and job design to determine job requirements and responsibilities.	73	3,62	0,995	0,08
Sourcing and attracting job candidates through job postings, employee referrals, and recruitment events.	73	3,41	1,177	0,99
Screening and shortlisting of job candidates.	72	3,9	1,128	0,17
Interviewing and selection of job candidates.	73	4,15	0,861	0,03
Onboarding and orientation of new employees.	73	4,04	0,92	0,02
Succession planning and talent management.	71	3,34	1,082	0,01
Maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee records.	72	3,57	1,197	0,00

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF RECRUITMENT PRACTICES (1-NOT AT ALL...5-TO A GREAT EXTENT)

⁵ Asymp. Significance of Chi-square Kruskal Wallis Test. Test is statistically significant at Sig.<0,05.

The table provides information on the average ratings and standard deviations of various HR practices related to job analysis, recruitment, selection, onboarding, succession planning, and record-keeping.

The mean ratings suggest that, overall, the respondents feel positive about these HR practices, with the highest mean rating for "Interviewing and selection of job candidates" (4.15) and the lowest for "Succession planning and talent management" (3.34).

However, the standard deviations suggest that there is a significant variation in how the respondents rate these practices, especially for "Sourcing and attracting job candidates" and "Maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee records," which have the highest standard deviations (1.177 and 1.197, respectively). This implies that some respondents may have had significant negative experiences with these practices while others may have had highly positive experiences.

Overall, this table suggests that while these HR practices are generally viewed positively, there is still room for improvement in certain areas, such as sourcing and attracting job candidates and maintaining accurate employee records, to ensure a more consistent and positive experience for all employees.

Kruskal Wallis test suggests that statistically significant differences between the countries exist in the case of »Interviewing and selection of job candidates«, »onboarding and orientation of new employees«, »succession planning and talent management«, and »maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee records«. Based on the data, the lowest frequency of these four HR practices seems to take place in Norway and Denmark, but on the other hand, these four activities seem to be rather frequent in Slovenia (especially »maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee records.«) and Greece (especially » onboarding and orientation of new employees«).

3.2.2 Social responsibility integrated into recruitment policies.

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Ensuring equal employment opportunity and compliance with anti-discrimination laws.	70	4.03	1.09	0.08
Implementing fair and transparent selection procedures.	70	4.01	1.083	0.01
Encouraging diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process and workplace.	68	3.75	1.111	0.14
Implementing environmentally friendly and sustainable practices in the workplace.	69	3.75	1.049	0.04
Providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees.	69	4.35	0.837	0.28
Promoting employee well-being and preventing burnout.	70	4.01	0.893	0.004
Providing training and development opportunities for all employees.	69	3.93	1.075	0.02

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Encouraging work-life balance for employees.	69	3.9	0.942	0.42

TABLE 2: FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MEASURES IN RECRUITING (1-NOT AT ALL...5-TO A GREAT EXTENT)

"Ensuring equal employment opportunity and compliance with anti-discrimination laws" has the highest mean score of 4.03, indicating that this is an area of strength for the organisation. In addition, it suggests that the organisation is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and follows fair hiring practices. "Providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees" has the second-highest mean score of 4.35, which is also a positive sign. It shows that the organisation is taking measures to ensure its employees' physical safety and well-being. "Encouraging work-life balance for employees" has a mean score of 3.9, indicating that the organisation is somewhat successful in promoting work-life balance among its employees, but there is room for improvement. "Promoting employee well-being and preventing burnout" has a mean score of 4.01, which suggests that the organisation is aware of the importance of employee well-being but may need to take additional steps to address burnout.

"Implementing fair and transparent selection procedures" and "Providing training and development opportunities for all employees" have mean scores of 4.01 and 3.93, respectively. These scores suggest that the organisation is committed to providing equal opportunities for all employees and investing in their development. "Encouraging diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process and workplace" and "Implementing environmentally friendly and sustainable practices in the workplace" have mean scores of 3.75, indicating that the organisation may need to take additional steps to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as sustainability. The table suggests that organisations promote employee well-being, equal employment opportunity, and sustainable practices. However, there is still room for improvement in some areas.

Kruskal-Wallis test suggests statistically significant differences between »implementing fair and transparent selection procedures«, »implementing environmentally friendly and sustainable practices in the workplace«, »promoting employee well-being and preventing burnout«, and »providing training and development opportunities for all employees«. In most cases, the highest frequency of the activities seems to be present in Spain and Greece; however, the listed aspects are less frequently present in Norway and Denmark and, in some cases, also Italy and Slovenia.

3.2.3 Employer branding in small companies

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Developing a clear and consistent employer brand message and image.	68	3,79	1,001	0,01
Building a strong online presence through social media, website, and other digital platforms.	68	3,43	1,213	0,03
Offering competitive benefits and compensation packages to attract top talent.	67	2,79	1,122	0,06
Creating employee-centred branding initiatives, such as	67	2,66	1,238	0,00

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
referral programs and employee advocacy.				3
Developing partnerships with industry influencers and organisations.	67	2,73	1,25	0,006
Participating in industry events and job fairs to increase employer brand awareness.	68	2,75	1,098	0,27
Building a positive company culture that aligns with employer brand values.	68	3,72	0,975	0,09
Implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand.	68	3,01	1,264	0,00

TABLE 3: FREQUENCY OF EMPLOYER BRANDING MEASURES (1-NOT AT ALL...5-TO A GREAT EXTENT)

The table presents the mean and standard deviation scores for various strategies related to employer branding.

The highest mean score was for "Building a positive company culture that aligns with employer brand values", with a mean of 3.72, indicating that this is the most effective strategy among those listed. The next most effective approach is "Developing a clear and consistent employer brand message and image", with a mean score of 3.79.

On the other hand, "Implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand" received the lowest mean score of 3.01, indicating that this strategy is perceived to be less effective in building a strong employer brand.

Regarding variability, the strategies "Offering competitive benefits and compensation packages to attract top talent" and "Creating employee-centred branding initiatives, such as referral programs and employee advocacy" had the highest standard deviation scores, indicating a more significant variation in responses for these strategies. This suggests that these strategies may not be universally effective for all organisations and may require customisation based on each organisation's unique needs and circumstances.

Kruskal Wallis test suggests that statistically significant differences between the countries exist in the case of »developing a clear and consistent employer brand message and image«, »building a strong online presence through social media, website, and other digital platforms«, »offering competitive benefits and compensation packages to attract top talent«, »creating employee-centred branding initiatives, such as referral programs and employee advocacy«, »building a positive company culture that aligns with employer brand values«, and »implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand«. In Norway, the respondents signalled lower frequencies of »developing a clear and consistent employer brand message and image« and »building a strong online presence through social media, website, and other digital platforms«, and in Denmark, the respondents stressed that »developing partnerships with industry influencers and organisations« and »implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand« are less frequently present in companies. The countries that report more frequent use of the listed practices are Greece and Spain.

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Competition for well-qualified talents has increased over the last three years	68	3,68	0,984	0,35
We see fewer applicants for each post than we did a year ago.	68	3,41	0,95	0,11
We are recruiting talent from a much wider geography compared with three years ago	68	3,6	0,964	0,65
In the last three years, we rely increasingly on the use of online tools and platforms for recruitment purposes.	68	3,76	0,979	0,49

TABLE 4: CHANGES IN RECRUITMENT POLICIES IN THE LAST YEARS (1-STRONGLY DISAGREE...5-STRONGLY AGREE)

The table presents the results of a survey conducted with 68 respondents who were asked to rate their level of agreement with four statements related to recruitment practices. The ratings were made using a Likert scale with values ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strong disagreement, and 5 indicates strong agreement.

The first statement, "Competition for well-qualified talents has increased over the last three years", has a mean of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 0.984. The mean score is above the midpoint of the scale (3), indicating that the respondents, on average, agree that competition for well-qualified talents has increased. However, the standard deviation suggests some variability in the responses, with some respondents strongly agreeing and others strongly disagreeing with the statement.

The second statement, "We are seeing fewer applicants for each post than we did a year ago", has a mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.95. The mean score is also above the midpoint of the scale, but it is slightly lower than the mean score for the first statement, indicating that the respondents, on average, are somewhat less convinced that there are fewer applicants for each post. Again, the standard deviation suggests considerable variability in the responses, with some respondents strongly agreeing and others strongly disagreeing with the statement.

The third statement, "We are recruiting talent from a much wider geography compared with three years ago", has a mean of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 0.964. The mean score is above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that the respondents, on average, agree that the organisation is recruiting talent from a wider geography. However, the standard deviation indicates some variability in the responses, with some respondents strongly agreeing and others strongly disagreeing with the statement.

The fourth statement, "In the last three years, we rely more and more on the use of online tools and platforms for recruitment purposes", has a mean of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 0.979. The mean score is the highest among the four statements, indicating that the respondents, on average, agree that the organisation is relying more on online tools and platforms for recruitment purposes. However, the standard deviation indicates some variability in the responses, with some respondents strongly agreeing and others strongly disagreeing with the statement.

The table suggests that the competition for well-qualified talents has increased over the last three years. As a result, organisations rely more on online tools and platforms for recruitment. However, some responses vary, indicating that not all respondents share the same perception of these trends. The Kruskal-Wallis' test suggests no statistically significant differences between the countries included in the research.

3.2.4 Relationships between employer branding, recruitment practices and social responsibility.

We also performed correlation and linear regression analysis as a part of the qualitative analysis. This way, we wanted to examine dependencies between the three main concepts in the focus of the ReCrew Project – employer branding (EB), recruitment practices (RP) and social responsibility (SR) measures integrated into the HR function (as a part of corporate responsibility policy). The variables EB, RP and SR were calculated as mean values of corresponding measurement scales. We also checked the scales' Cronbach alpha as a measure of internal consistency. The alpha values were from 0.792 for RP to 0.891 for SR. The alpha value for EB was 0.844. Therefore, all the alpha values were considered acceptable or good, which means the measurement scales are reliable.

A growing body of literature suggests a positive relationship between recruiting practices, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and employer branding. Recruiting practices are the methods and strategies companies use to identify and attract job applicants. CSR refers to a company's voluntary actions to improve social, economic, and environmental outcomes beyond what the law requires. Employer branding refers to a company's reputation as an employer and the perceived value of working for that company.

Studies have shown that CSR initiatives can positively impact a company's employer branding, as these initiatives can help enhance the company's reputation as a socially responsible employer. This, in turn, can make the company more attractive to job seekers and improve the effectiveness of its recruiting practices. Furthermore, companies that engage in CSR initiatives are more likely to attract and retain employees who value social responsibility and ethical practices. This can lead to a more engaged and committed workforce, further enhancing the company's employer branding, and recruiting practices. In addition, some studies have suggested that recruiting practices can impact a company's CSR initiatives and employer branding. For example, companies with strong employer branding may be better able to attract candidates who align with their CSR values and are more likely to support these initiatives. The literature suggests a positive relationship between recruiting practices, CSR, and employer branding. Companies with CSR initiatives and strong employer branding will likely have a more engaged and committed workforce, attract, and retain top talent, and enhance their overall reputation as socially responsible employers.

Based on the findings from the literature, we first performed a correlation analysis.

	RP	SR	EB
RP	1	0.526**	0.483**
SR	0.526**	1	0.665**
EB	0.483**	0.665**	1

TABLE 5: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RP, SR, AND EB

As can be seen from Table 5, the correlations between the three variables are all significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), indicating a strong relationship between each pair of variables. The correlation between RP and SR is 0.526**, which shows a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The correlation between SR and EB is 0.665**, indicating an even stronger positive relationship. Finally, the correlation between RP and EB is 0.483**, again indicating a positive relationship but slightly weaker than the SR-EB correlation. Overall, the analysis suggests strong positive relationships between RP, SR, and EB; however, correlation does not imply causation.

Another analysis we did was identifying possible mediating relationships between the variables. Namely, from the literature review, we suspected that the social responsibility measures might mediate the cause-effect relationship between recruitment practices and the employee branding variable. For this reason, we performed the PROCESS algorithm authored by Andrew F. Hayes. However, the analysis showed that we could not imply the mediation effect. For this reason, we concluded our investigation with a simple linear regression analysis in which only two predictors (RP and SR) and one dependent variable (EB) were included. The analysis indicates that the overall model is statistically significant in predicting EB ($F(2, 65) = 28.199, p < .001$), with an R-squared of .465 and an adjusted R-squared of .448. This means the predictors together explain 46.5% of the variance in EB.

The coefficients table shows the unstandardized and standardized coefficients for each predictor. For example, SR significantly affects EB ($B = .579, p < .001$), with a standardized coefficient of .570. This means that for every one-unit increase in SR, EB increases by .579 units, holding all other variables constant. Conversely, RP is not a significant predictor of EB ($B = .204, p = .106$), with a standardized coefficient of .176. On the other hand, the ANOVA analysis shows that the regression model explains a significant amount of variance in EB ($p < .001$), with a regression sum of squares of 19,098 and a residual sum of squares of 22,011. The standard error of the estimate is .58192, representing the average distance that the observed values deviate from the predicted values by the regression equation.

3.2.5 Summary of findings.

The following concluding thoughts can be noted if we summarise the quantitative analysis.

Respondents generally view HR practices positively, with "interviewing and selection of job candidates" receiving the highest mean score and "succession planning and talent management" receiving the lowest. However, standard deviation scores suggest a significant variation in how respondents view certain practices, particularly "sourcing and attracting job candidates" and "maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee records."

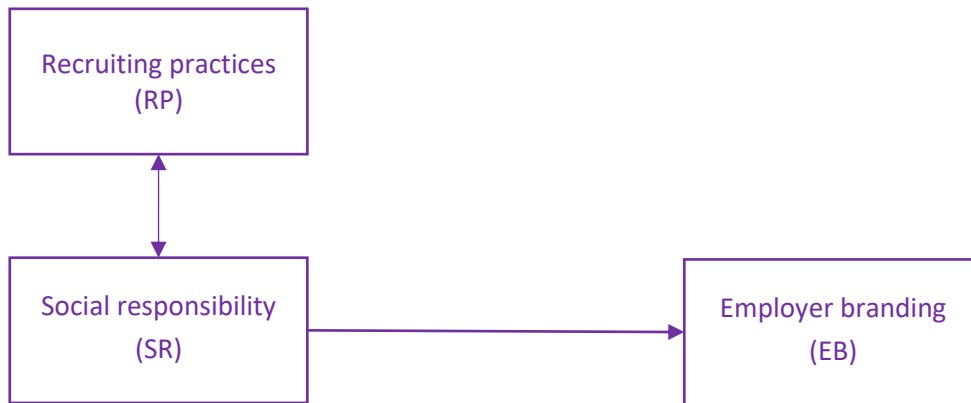
The analysis also shows that organisations generally promote employee well-being, equal employment opportunity, and sustainable practices, but there is still room for improvement in some areas.

Regarding employer branding strategies, "building a positive company culture that aligns with employer brand values" is the most effective strategy, while "implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand" is perceived to be the least effective. Standard deviation scores suggest that some strategies may not be universally effective for all organisations and may require customisation based on unique needs and circumstances.

The analyses investigating relationships between the variables measuring recruitment practices,

social responsibility in HR function and employer branding emphasised the importance of introducing social responsibility measures in recruiting practices. Namely, those two variables synergistically, since they are strongly correlated, influence employer branding (which shows the regression analysis), thus increasing the chances of attracting talent. The model coming from the statistical analysis is visualised in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: MODEL WITH DEPENDENCIES BETWEEN RC, SR, AND EB



Kruskal Wallis test results show that statistically significant differences exist between countries for several HR practices and employer branding strategies, with Norway and Denmark reporting lower frequencies for some practices and strategies compared to other countries.

3.3 Key conclusions of empirical research.

Overall, the respondents feel positive about various HR practices related to job analysis, recruitment, selection, onboarding, succession planning, and record-keeping, with the highest mean rating for "interviewing and selection of job candidates" and the lowest for "succession planning and talent management."

While these HR practices are generally viewed positively, there is still room for improvement in certain areas, such as sourcing and attracting job candidates and maintaining accurate employee records, to ensure a more consistent and positive employee experience.

Statistically significant differences between the countries exist in the case of various HR practices, such as "interviewing and selection of job candidates," "onboarding and orientation of new employees," "succession planning and talent management," and "maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee records."

The companies are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and follow fair hiring practices. In addition, they are taking measures to ensure their employees' physical safety and well-being. The companies promote employee well-being, equal employment opportunity, and sustainable practices, which contribute significantly to building an image of an attractive employer. However, there is still room for improvement in some areas.

Building a positive company culture that aligns with employer brand values is the most effective strategy among those listed, followed by developing a clear and consistent employer brand message and image. "Implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand" received the lowest mean score.

Statistically significant differences between the countries exist in the case of various employer branding strategies, such as "developing a clear and consistent employer brand message and image," "building a strong online presence through social media, website, and other digital platforms," "offering competitive benefits and compensation packages to attract top talent," "creating employee-centred branding initiatives, such as referral programs and employee advocacy," "building a positive company culture that aligns with employer brand values," and "implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand."

In the case of recruiting, smaller businesses use digital technology mainly for introductory interviewing of candidates and posting job offers online. The most frequently digital media mentioned by the respondents are primarily videoconferencing platforms, social media (LinkedIn and Facebook) and some local/national job platforms.

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4 Attachments.

4.1 Analysis of the interviews

How does your company approach the recruiting process?⁶

Online portals	Employment agencies	External recruiters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – online, social media, indeed, portals – Infojobs – LinkedIn – various platforms are used; Infojobs – a platform offered from a nearby city – LinkedIn – posts on social networks, especially LinkedIn – for less qualified staff Facebook. – posts on social networks, especially LinkedIn, and for less qualified staff, also Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – employment agencies that manage the search and selection, and very often even the hiring – through an announcement at the Employment Agency but without a public announcement – employment Agency refers us to suitable workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – mid-size enterprises have recruiters reach out to qualified candidates in the market.
Internships, universities, training centres	Waiting, randomly responding	Own employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – review own networks and actively approach people. – finding students for internships, and once they have completed their internships, they are given an employment contract. – Especially for qualified positions, semi-internal processes between university/training centres – nearby institutes – in the case of junior experts starting with internships or project-based contracts (duration up to 6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – passively wait for applicants – CVs that come to us randomly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – contacts of own workers – job offers posted internally to the employees.

⁶ Recruitment process is defined as the search for highly qualified and seasoned candidates for a job opening and urging them to apply for the job

Additional claims:

- combination of approaches, in the case of senior experts, we use a more flexible approach; the recruitment process can vary based on the skills required, based on need analysis in terms of skills and number of employees.

Who does the staff recruitment in your company?

<i>External services</i>	<i>Internal services</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - external HR consultants - employment agencies - Employment Agency refers suitable workers. - through an announcement at the Employment Agency but without a public announcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - selection managed by people in charge of the small company. - the director interviews and selects/recruits. - COO, CEO, Hiring managers, HR managers, recruiter. - An HR manager with the head of the company. - Human resources and technical personnel - HR manager, together with management and the head of each department - The director of the relevant business area - CEO - HR manager

Additional claims:

- the director decides, the business secretary conducts the discussions, and the immediate manager/department manager leads further procedures - until selection, there are no personnel officers in smaller companies, and sometimes agencies engage in the process.

What changes have occurred in the resourcing process in your company due to the COVID pandemic? Are there any changes related to the use of IT technology?

<i>Online interviews</i>	<i>Protection of personal data</i>	<i>No change</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews through Zoom and MS Teams - start using more technological tools to reach out to candidates and meet with them, adopting different interview platforms such as MS Teams, Zoom, etc. - Interviews occur online more than before, even if people are based in the same city. - More remote work - Two-phase selection process - written offers/requests, interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the increased billing and personnel turnover, we protected much more information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There has been no change because a lot of work is done online. - No change - Nothing

via Zoom, which lasts 15 minutes, and we only invite promising candidates to the 2nd round, with whom we have a 60-minute interview. Then comes the selection.

Additional claim:

- Preliminary interviews take place online, and at the end, they take place in person; CVs are usually sent in electronic formats; medium-sized companies use digital applications, and smaller ones do not.
- We used LinkedIn and Facebook to promote the job openings.

How does your company keep up with recruitment trends and adopt the latest strategies and tactics?

<i>In-house experts</i>	<i>External HR specialists</i>	<i>Training</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are trying to keep up with the trends - We are turning to in-house or external HR specialists who also manage the training and updating of companies in this regard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are turning to in-house or external HR specialists, who also manage the training and updating of companies in this regard - By hiring external recruitment consultants - With annual HR staff training and with an external company's advice. - as a recruitment agency, we regularly update employment practices by cooperating with external specialised agencies, applying a digitally supported selection process, collaborating with universities and career centres (at universities), and attending career fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are turning to in-house or external HR specialists, who also manage the training and updating of companies in this regard - With annual HR staff training and with an external company's advice.
<i>Cooperation with universities and career centres</i>	<i>Career fairs</i>	<i>Online platforms</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as a recruitment agency, we regularly update employment practices by cooperating with external specialised agencies, applying a digitally supported selection process, collaborating with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as a recruitment agency, we regularly update employment practices by cooperating with external specialised agencies, applying a digitally supported selection process, collaborating with universities and career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through platforms that are dedicated to continuous and active training and work - LinkedIn and activities with other companies in the sector - use of social networks, and thus sharing between

<p>universities and career centres (at universities), and attending career fairs</p>	<p>centres (at universities), and attending career fairs</p>	<p>interested and qualified personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – as a recruitment agency, we regularly update employment practices by cooperating with external specialised agencies, applying a digitally supported selection process, collaborating with universities and career centres (at universities), and attending career fairs – We expanded the evaluation element concerning social media and/or specific platforms
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Additional claims:

- We are not so concerned with trends but with what works. Therefore, we focused on employer branding and pointed measures to reach candidates.

What are the expectations of today's job seekers? In what companies and sectors do new job seekers prefer to be employed?

Compensation	Personal development	Working environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It is not only about the wage but also the development expectations and working environment (material and non-material) – Working conditions, more specifically in hours and salary – Flexibility in work location, preferably remote, with reasonable compensation and benefits package – Primarily flexible work practices, work from home, adequate technical support, free days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It is not only about the wage but also the development expectations and working environment (material and non-material) – The expectations are to continue training, progress, and learn increasingly. – Job seekers avoid responsible jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It is not only about the wage but also the development expectations and working environment (material and non-material) – Since the pandemic, I believe the labour market has also changed for candidates- they are increasingly looking for organised, inclusive, and international companies. – Flexibility in work location, preferably remote, with good compensation and benefits packages – Working conditions, more specifically in hours and salary – Many candidates are also not mobile – geographically close locations

- Primarily flexible work practices, work from home, adequate technical support, free days

International scope of work	Sectors/industries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - our work in the area of EU projects very much attracts people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most attractive sectors are IT, marketing, and environmental improvement sector (consulting and engineering). - Job seekers want to be employed in companies and stable sectors, like pharma, banking, and IT. - Big companies - First desire is employment in larger companies, where the work is less varied, or in the public sector

What candidate characteristics do you look for when recruiting them? For example, from what geographic areas does your company source them (e.g., locally, nationally, internationally)?

Personal features	Geographical location	Flexibility and availability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-minded, with common sense, a tendency to overcome gender bias - Characteristics sought are reliability, precision, and a sense of belonging to the company and the sector in which the company operates - candidates who are active and eager to contribute and learn - the need for computer knowledge, languages, and more specific studies adapted to the position - Important to be computer literate, show at least a higher level of responsibility, and be precise, non-conflicting, or manageable. - Willingness to learn, ability to collaborate, flexibility, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - situated locally and geographically close - locally or nationally - cultural fit and curiosity get the most focus - national and international staff - Local people closest to our work centre - mostly engineers - we recruit staff locally because they are more diligent and loyal. - Location of residence primarily due to the cost (preferably under 40 km) - we prefer hiring people from our region but are open to solutions. The main issue is that the city we are based in (Potenza) is not attractive, especially for young people, and we see this as an obstacle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who can be more available and flexible with the working hours?

- responsibility, high professional competence, digital literacy, Initiative
- we require English-speaking skills, which is challenging to meet in our region

Expectation of stability of employment Experience

- Candidates seek stability rather than constant change, as they would in large and multinational companies.
 - Previous experiences in the relevant business area are very much appreciated.
-

Additional claims:

- Characteristics: it depends on the job profile we are looking for.

How does your company plan, acquire, and retain employees? How do you deal with exceptionally talented individuals?

<i>HRM activities</i>	<i>Candidate retention</i>	<i>Focus on talents</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – By the job posting, screening, 2-3 interviews, online tests, trying to give every year raise in wages, offering them free training based on their needs, frequent out-of-office activities . – Talent recruitment planning is more or less the same as in larger companies: analysing the company's needs according to projects and objectives in the short and long term. – Management offers different extra-work activities to strengthen commitment and camaraderie among colleagues. – Enhancing their skills involving in training activities with recognition of their skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Candidate retention has been a hot topic recently as the market is highly competitive, and it can be more difficult for smaller companies to retain candidates. – The focus is on flexibility, a relaxed and familiar environment, and monetary bonuses for achieved goals. – greater labour flexibility and bonuses on targets – Management and the HR department try to motivate staff on a weekly and individual basis. – Given the increased work volume, we are planning in the short term. Greater emphasis is placed on employee retention, primarily training, suggestions for co-creating work tasks, and adapting work processes to their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If they have unique talents, they are given much more support. – There is no talent management in small companies - more talented employees are given additional work, involved in more demanding job posts, and receive rewards and bonuses; there is no succession planning in small companies - only a higher degree of flexibility for training and development, which, however, is not systematically organised, except for onboarding. – Our company has a talent development program; the talents have a prepared development program, and we include talents in projects. – Talents are assigned more demanding tasks. An

capabilities are desirable

additional reward system
is designed for talents.

Additional claims:

- The activities are not systemised, only onboarding a bit more systematic approach.

How do smaller companies inform the public and potential job seekers about their staffing needs? How do smaller companies approach attract staff? How active? What do they offer to them?

<i>Descriptions of day routine</i>	<i>Advertising through employment agencies</i>	<i>Sharing information on LinkedIn, social media, and online platforms</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – analytical description of the everyday routine, development procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the best way for small companies to advertise their job offer is through employment agencies that target a wider pool of candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What I observe, however, is that many small companies also rely on dedicated platforms such as LinkedIn – Sharing internally and on social media, promoting advertisements and on job boards. – We use social networks to make ourselves known – LinkedIn and InfoJobs – According to our findings, LinkedIn is the best channel for disseminating information about vacancies. Then there are the paid ads on Facebook. – In our company, we usually publish the vacancy on our own website, announce the vacancy via social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn), publish the vacancy on job search portals,
<i>Collaboration with external associations</i>	<i>Posting posters</i>	<i>Own website</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Apart from the previously mentioned activities, the company collaborates with different non-profit associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Local door advertising (especially service sector), posting posters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In our company, we usually publish the vacancy on our own website
<i>Local media</i>	<i>Colleges and high schools</i>	

- In our company, we usually publish [...] the vacancy in the local media
- vacancies are advertised at colleges and high schools

Additional claims:

- So far, we have used LinkedIn in particular, but the results have not always been positive, as the applications we have received very often do not meet our requirements.
- Digital marketing and out-of-the-box measures.
- Making skills shareable among employees to improve the transfer of information and interaction.

How do smaller companies conduct candidate selection?

<i>Screening</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Tests</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CV' screening, 1st interview, online test, 2nd interview, hiring. – Each CV received is thoroughly reviewed. – In our company, we select based on sent CVs, conduct personnel interviews with candidates, and perform psychometric testing with the candidates. The candidates also take knowledge tests. – We conduct a pre-selection through submitted CVs and then move on to an interview, online or F2F – We check the CV received; in case of a need or skills not present, we request consultancy at specialised companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CV' screening, 1st interview, online test, 2nd interview, hiring. – Through various interviews – The selection of candidates is two-stage. First, after obtaining the received offers, we invite the candidates to a short online interview and then a 60-minute online interview with interesting candidates. Then comes the selection. – In our company, we select based on sent CVs, conduct personnel interviews with candidates, and perform psychometric testing with the candidates. The candidates also take knowledge tests. – We conduct a pre-selection through submitted CVs and then move on to an interview, online or F2F 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CV' screening, 1st interview, online test, 2nd interview, hiring. – In our company, we select based on sent CVs, conduct personnel interviews with candidates, and perform psychometric testing with the candidates. The candidates also take knowledge tests. – In general, companies execute psychological tests for key personnel (managers, experts), most frequently interviews, and also give special assignments (problem situations).
<p><i>Several steps to achieve quality and evaluate risks</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Very often, in small companies, there are more selection steps 		

because there is more focus on quality than on the number of candidates to meet. There is also more time to get to know the candidates. An attempt is made to acquaint the candidate with the different sectors of the company and their managers in depth.

- The process can be either fast, smooth, or extremely long because the company wants to evaluate all possible risks.

How do smaller companies ensure new employees become familiar with the company and acquire the necessary knowledge and behaviour? How is the onboarding usually executed?

<i>Training</i>	<i>Onboarding</i>	<i>Welcome kit/letter</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three months of training, another 3 months of on-the-job training information on policies, technical infrastructure, quality, and ISO procedures etc. - We use training courses so that they can see how the company works, and a tutor is assigned to them so that they can learn from the beginning. - We do a lot of training in the field in a relatively informal way, and we try to encourage teamwork and social interaction to create cohesive and well-functioning teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The hiring manager or HR responsible oversees the onboarding and the necessary learning. - In our company, we [...] prepare induction programs for new employees, organise training for new employees, have prepared video content for new employees, with the help of which they get to know the organisation, rules, and instructions. - Employer branding. Onboarding is tailored to each individual case. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is often no HR area in small companies, making it challenging to organise employees' first days at work. Relying on external consultants to take care of the onboarding process can be helpful as employees are supported in their first steps in the company. Activities that can be organised for onboarding can be a welcome kit with all the useful tools for the job and interactive guides on the various sectors and history. - We have a "welcome letter" for new employees. - In our company, we assign a mentor to new employees, [...] have prepared video content for new employees, with the help of which they get to know the organisation, rules, and

instructions.

- During selection, we illustrate the company activity and insert their area before starting; they are presented to the company function manager.
-

Assigned person/mentor/tutor

- The hiring manager or HR responsible oversees the onboarding and the necessary learning.
 - We use training courses so that they can see how the company works, and a tutor is assigned to them so that they can learn from the beginning.
 - There is a first presentation in the different departments. Then a person is assigned to whom they can turn if they have any questions about your conditions and another person to explain each and every one of the functions that you must develop.
 - New candidates are given a mentor at the beginning of their employment, who collaborates with them one-on-one. They then continue to have a mentor based on their need. We have recorded pictorial instructions for the lower frame. In addition, the management staff has weekly informative and educational meetings with the director and the management school.
 - Usually, assign someone for a step-by-step introduction - a secretary and mentor.
 - In our company, we assign a mentor to new employees, prepare induction programs
-

for new employees,
organise training for new
employees, have prepared
video content for new
employees, with the help of
which they get to know the
organisation, rules, and
instructions

How do smaller companies take care of their image as attractive employers?

Working environment and conditions

- good environment, good wages, good training, day offs, frequent team bonding activities etc
- Simply by offering the best conditions that can be delivered and keeping staff with many years of seniority.
- Our company provides good working conditions, provides a competitive salary policy, and enables a hybrid work model.

Compensation

- good environment, good wages, good training, day offs, frequent team bonding activities etc

Training

- good environment, wages, training, day offs, frequent team bonding activities, etc.
- Our company facilitates employee development and enables a hybrid work model.

Free days

- good environment, good wages, good training, day offs, frequent team bonding activities etc

Team bonding activities

- good environment, wages, training, day offs, frequent team bonding activities, etc.

Website

- Take care of one's online image with a straightforward website.
- To maintain that image, we are always on the cutting edge.

Social media

- Take care of one's online image by having a clear and straightforward website; update social pages such as LinkedIn where one can post about one's work, presenting the month's employees or achievements.
- To maintain that image, we are always on the cutting edge.
- In particular, the director is constantly present on social networks with posts and videos. We also publish regular articles about our activity in two magazines.

New technology and I&D

- We offer new technologies and I+D that other companies do not have.

Publishing activities

- In particular, the director is constantly present on social networks with posts and videos. We also publish regular articles about our activity in two magazines.

Presentation of work on social media

- Take care of one's online image by having a clear and straightforward website; update social pages such as LinkedIn where one can post about one's work, presenting the month's employees or achievements.
- Our company publishes information on social networks.

Participation in contests

- Our company participates in competitions to select the best employer.

Various initiatives among employees

- Our company has selected Recruitment Ambassadors among our colleagues.
- Small companies also organise sports events, etc.
- Small companies also organise sports events, etc.

Additional claims:

- This is our limit. The company is small; we have many projects to manage, many more to develop and minimal time. This leads us to work by priorities and to hire project managers first. In the future, we would like to structure a communication area that can promote job opportunities in cooperation with the recruiting manager.
- We apply national and contractual rules by not overlooking respect for people's needs and health.

What workplace policies, including health&wellbeing, do smaller companies promote that might attract job seekers?

Working conditions

- Flexible hours
- Schedule flexibility and being able to work at home at certain times
- It is a company in which our ideology is based on work-life balance, diversity and social inclusion, interpersonal relations, prevention of discrimination, cooperation and teamwork, autonomy at work and flexible working methods, etc.
- Apart from the annual medical examination service, they are offered a job coach service as soon as needed.
- We believe that autonomy at work is essential, and this should be reached after quite a brief time.
- Our company has promoted organisational well-being and learning of foreign languages; we have promoted flexible working hours and part-time work.

Interpersonal relationships in a company

- Harassment Policy
- It is a company in which our ideology is based on work-life balance, diversity and social inclusion, interpersonal relations, prevention of discrimination, cooperation and teamwork, autonomy at work and flexible working methods, etc.

- social events
- Queries and proposals from employees are listened to and valued.

Health & wellbeing

- Health and Safety Policy
- health insurance
- Reimbursement of public transport expenses
- Apart from the annual medical examination service, they are offered a job coach service as soon as needed.
- A healthy and safe working environment and well-being are guaranteed. In addition, employees can suggest aids that reduce illnesses/injuries.
- Our company has promoted organisational well-being and learning of foreign languages; we have promoted flexible working hours and part-time work.

Ergonomics

- home office setup

Work-family balance

- It is a company in which our ideology is based on work-life balance, diversity and social inclusion, interpersonal relations, prevention of discrimination, cooperation and teamwork, autonomy at work and flexible working methods, etc.
- welfare package extended to children
- There are all kinds of advantages in terms of work-life balance
- Coordinating professional and private life is also possible, especially with small children or older family members.
- We promote the work-life balance and are totally open to home/remote working practices.

Marketplace Policies

- Quality Policy
- Company warrants

Safety and Security

- Data and Information Protection Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Cyber Security
- Companies use the national E-knowledge portal for onboarding and health and safety training (rental of contents)
- Safety at work is also important, and explainer videos support learning - the government provided funds for digitalisation.

Environmental awareness

- Our company is socially responsible and sustainably oriented. We do paperless business.

Social inclusion and non-discrimination

- We employ disabled people, thereby ensuring diversity and social inclusion. We offer them

independence at work and, at the same time, constant support, and we enable flexible forms of work - work at home.

Promotion of volunteering

- We intend to strengthen our social identity; therefore, we plan volunteering activities for our employees during a limited number of monthly working hours.

What social responsibility policies, if any, do smaller companies promote that might attract job seekers?

Environmental awareness

- Environmental Procedures
- Recycling events to integrate disadvantaged local workers.
- We have applied and implemented ISO14001
- The company's activity promotes recycling and paperless business, thereby striving to protect the natural environment. In our opinion, we are also clear in providing information that we are a responsible company.

Safety and Security

- Fraud, Bribery, and corruption policy

Health & wellbeing

- Plant-based canine lunch

Local community involvement

- Local procurement,
- employee involvement in local community activities,
- regular financial support to the local community
- The company has an open dialogue with the local community, where we are most active with the regional chambers of crafts, including the chambers of commerce.
- We procure fruit for our employees from a supplier who buys fruit from local suppliers.

Marketplace Policies

- Child Protection
- The company provides clear and accurate information about our services. In addition, it offers institutions and companies online educational products at low prices so that they can approach archiving processes in the company themselves. At the same time, we are constantly available for additional information, feedback, and help. With this kind of effort, we are building a responsible network in our industry.

4.2 Questionnaire for the quantitative survey.

The questionnaire was developed under ReCrew Erasmus+ project. It aims to collect feedback from entrepreneurs and SME managers regarding the resourcing process in small companies. You can find more information on the project website. We thank you in advance for filling out the questionnaire. Please take a few moments and complete this survey by clicking on the Next page button.

Q1 - Let us first know from which country you are:

- Denmark
- Greece
- Italy
- Spain
- Slovenia
- Norway

Q2 - In which industry does your company operate?

Q3 - Please, assess to which extent you rely on the execution of the following RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES in your company.

	Not at all	Little	Somewhat	To a large extent	To a great extent
Job analysis and job design to determine job requirements and responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sourcing and attracting job candidates through job postings, employee referrals, and recruitment events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Screening and shortlisting of job candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interviewing and selection of job candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Onboarding and orientation of new employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Succession planning and talent management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee records.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 - Please, assess to what extent you integrate the following SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY measures into your company's recruitment activities.

	Not at all	Little	Somewhat	To a large extent	To a great extent
Ensuring equal employment opportunity and compliance with anti-discrimination laws.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing fair and transparent selection procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process and workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing environmentally friendly and sustainable practices in the workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting employee well-being and preventing burnout.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing training and development opportunities for all employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging work-life balance for employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 - Please, assess to which extent you integrate the following recruitment aspects into your EMPLOYER BRANDING strategies.

	Not at all	Little	Somewhat	To a large extent	To a great extent
Developing a clear and consistent employer brand message and image.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building a strong online presence through social media, website, and other digital platforms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offering competitive benefits and compensation packages to attract top talent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all	Little	Somewhat	To a large extent	To a great extent
Creating employee-centred branding initiatives, such as referral programs and employee advocacy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing partnerships with industry influencers and organizations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in industry events and job fairs to increase employer brand awareness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building a positive company culture that aligns with employer brand values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing an employee recognition and rewards program that supports the employer brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 - Please, consider the following aspects of recruitment in your company.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Competition for well-qualified talents has increased over the last three years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We see fewer applicants for each post than we did a year ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are recruiting talent from a much wider geography compared with three years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the last three years, we rely increasingly on the use of online tools and platforms for recruitment purposes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4.3 Questionnaire for the interviews

The questionnaire was developed under ReCrew Erasmus+ project. It aims to collect feedback from HRM consultants and professionals regarding the resourcing process in small companies. You can find more information on the project website. We thank you in advance for filling out the questionnaire. To start answering the questions, click on the Next page. ReCrew project team

Q1 - Let us first know from which country you are:

- Denmark
- Greece
- Italy
- Spain
- Slovenia
- Norway

Q2 - Your position:

in-company position, for instance, an HR manager responsible for resourcing external service provider, for instance, an HR consultant advising companies about resourcing and other HR aspects

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q3 - ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF RESOURCING IN SMALL COMPANIES

(1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q4 - How does your company approach the recruiting process?

(Recruitment process is defined as the search for highly qualified and seasoned candidates for a job opening and urging them to apply for the job)

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q5 - Who does the staff recruitment in your company?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q6 - What changes have occurred in the resourcing process in your company due to the COVID pandemic? Are there any changes related to the use of IT technology?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q7 - How does your company keep up with recruitment trends and adopting the latest strategies and tactics?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q8 - CHARACTERISTICS OF JOB SEEKERS

(1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q9 - What are the expectations of today's job seekers? In what companies and sectors do new job seekers prefer to be employed?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q10 - What candidate characteristics do you look for when recruiting them? From what geographic areas does your company source them (e.g., locally, nationally, internationally)?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q11 - PROCESS OF RESOURCING

(1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q12 - How does your company plan, acquire, and retain employees? How do you deal with especially talented individuals?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q13 - To attract the best talent, a company needs to get the word out about a job opening. What are the considerations and actions your company is taking in this regard?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q14 - How does your company conduct candidate selection?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q15 - How does your company ensure that new employees become familiar with the company and acquire the necessary knowledge and behaviour? How is the onboarding usually executed?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q16 - EMPLOYER BRANDING

(1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q17 - How does your company take care of its image as an attractive employer?

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q18 - What workplace policies, including health & well-being, does your company promote that might attract job seekers?

- e.g., career planning, consultations with employees, health, safety and welfare arrangements, work-life balance, diversity and social inclusion, interpersonal relations, prevention of discrimination, cooperation and teamwork, autonomy at work and flexible forms of work, etc.

IF (1) Q2 = [1] (HR manager)

Q19 - What social responsibility policies, if any, does your company promote that might attract job seekers?

- environmental policies such as energy conservation, recycling, pollution prevention, protection of the natural environment, sustainable transport, providing clear information about CSR.
- community policies such as training opportunities for the local community, open dialogue with the local community, local purchasing, employees participating in local community activities, regular financial support to the local community.
- marketplace policies such as honesty in the promotion mix, clear and accurate information about products, timely payments of invoices, providing feedback to external stakeholders, complaints register, promotion of responsible entrepreneurship in own network.

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q20 - ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF RESOURCING IN SMALL COMPANIES

(2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q21 - How do small companies approach the recruiting process?

(Recruitment process is defined as the search for highly qualified and seasoned candidates for a job opening and urging them to apply for the job)

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q22 - Who does the staff recruitment in small companies?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q23 - What changes have occurred in the resourcing process in small companies due to the COVID pandemic? Are there any changes related to the use of IT technology?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q24 - How do small companies keep up with recruitment trends and adopting the latest strategies and tactics?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q25 - CHARACTERISTICS OF JOB SEEKERS

(2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q26 - What are the expectations of today's job seekers? In what companies and sectors do new job seekers prefer to be employed?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q27 - What candidate characteristics do small companies look for when recruiting them? From what geographic areas do small companies source them (e.g., locally, nationally, internationally)?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q28 - PROCESS OF RESOURCING

(2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q29 - How do small companies plan, acquire, and retain employees? How do they deal with especially talented individuals?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q30 - To attract the best talent, a company needs to get the word out about a job opening. What are the considerations and actions small companies are taking in this regard?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q31 - How do small companies conduct candidate selection?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q32 - How do small companies ensure that new employees become familiar with the company and acquire the necessary knowledge and behaviour? How is the onboarding usually executed?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q33 - EMPLOYER BRANDING

(2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q34 - How do small companies take care of their image as attractive employer?

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q35 - What workplace policies, including health & well-being, do small companies promote that might attract job seekers?

- e.g., career planning, consultations with employees, health, safety and welfare arrangements, work-life balance, diversity and social inclusion, interpersonal relations, prevention of discrimination, cooperation and teamwork, autonomy at work and flexible forms of work, etc.
-

IF (2) Q2 = [2] (HR consultant)

Q36 - What social responsibility policies, if any, do small companies promote that might attract job seekers?

- environmental policies such as energy conservation, recycling, pollution prevention, protection of the natural environment, sustainable transport, providing clear information about CSR.
- community policies such as training opportunities for the local community, open dialogue with the local community, local purchasing, employees participating in local community activities, regular financial support to the local community.
- marketplace policies such as honesty in the promotion mix, clear and accurate information about products, timely payments of invoices, providing feedback to external stakeholders, complaints register, promotion of responsible entrepreneurship in own network.

PART 2: FOCUS GROUPS

WP2 – ACTIVITY 2.6

Stakeholders Consultation

5 Summative findings

Stakeholder consultations took place during the period from June to September 2023. The consultations were conducted through focus groups and individual interviews in all project countries, including Greece, Slovenia, Spain, Denmark, Italy and Norway. The findings from the focus groups revealed consistent themes related to recruitment practices, social responsibility, and employer branding.

Participants in the focus groups provided a wide range of Insights. Five members from CBL Patras, Eight8, Public Employment Service, and Ionian TV provided thoughts on business support, marketing, employment services, and specialised business media in Greece. Four individuals from client services, business support, and human resources management from firms such as Hiberus Booster and 960 pixels contributed to the talks in Spain. Slovenia's focus group consisted of four people from various fields: company incubation, entrepreneurship, project management, and product management. Meanwhile, in Denmark, only one participant specialised in career counselling for overseas professionals. Italy's focus group included five people from several industries: communication and development/AI, recruiting, human resources management, and marketing and communication. The presence of notable organisations such as Confindustria and Orienta provided a comprehensive perspective. The Norwegian focus group included five experts in organisational development, recruitment processes, business development, the economy, and leadership. Experts from NTE Holding AS, MindMap AS, Smart Norway AS, and Smart Media AS offered their knowledge. Participants in these groups emphasised the linked nature of recruitment, social responsibility, and employer branding.

The 20 participants' total knowledge contributed to understanding the challenges and opportunities in these areas in varied European contexts. They highlight recurring themes. Recruitment tactics emphasise matching persons to the company's beliefs and aims, research, and a post-COVID shift towards professionalism. Social responsibility positively impacts employer branding, helping firms expand while preserving a positive image. Culture, values, consistent communication, and adherence to principles are all critical components of employment branding. Employer branding is influenced by the entire employee experience, from recruitment through departure, with HR operations playing a crucial role. Poorly performed recruitment practices, including the inclusion of AI, can have a negative influence on employer branding. Data-driven decision-making, social media management, and emphasising employee well-being all help workplace branding. The interrelated nature of recruitment, social responsibility, and employer branding is emphasised, emphasising the importance of a comprehensive strategy for developing and sustaining a great employer brand.

In the following subsection, there are the main impressions from individual countries

5.1 Greece

Participants in the survey covered a variety of topics connected to recruitment practises, social responsibility, and employer branding, including:

Participants characterised effective recruitment as finding employees who fulfil the firm's goals, have the necessary abilities, and contribute to the growth of SMEs. Employer branding benefits from effective recruitment practices. They emphasised the increasing value placed on personnel, particularly in the post-COVID age.

The acts of a firm towards its community, society, and environment that reflect its principles and ethics are referred to as social responsibility. Participants emphasised the importance of social responsibility initiatives in employer branding. They stated that a strong employer brand can boost the effectiveness of these activities. Some SMEs have been noted to disregard the necessity of publicising their social responsibility initiatives, which may impact their overall branding.

Participants defined employer branding as a company's public and potential employee perception. It includes the ideals, culture, and advantages of the organisation. They emphasised the significance of having a strong employer brand in attracting and retaining personnel. This includes highlighting values, rewards, and chances for growth.

Participants ranked "culture & corporate values," "candidate communication," and "public perception" as important factors in establishing a good employer brand. Employee anecdotes, advocacy, corporate reviews, and a great work atmosphere contributed to this strength.

Participants emphasised the importance of culture, corporate values, successful job advertising, and pleasant communication with candidates as elements directly impacted by the organisation. They also emphasised the importance of employee stories, lobbying, and constant online presence in moulding public image and establishing a successful employer brand.

The participants ranked public impression as the most critical factor in establishing a great employer brand, closely followed by employee tales and advocacy. Awards were viewed as having the ability to improve a company's reputation, yet their credibility was dependent on the awarding organisation.

In conclusion, good recruitment practices, social responsibility commitment, and a strong employer branding strategy all contribute to a company's reputation, employee satisfaction, and overall success. Culture, values, effective communication, employee engagement, and favourable public impression all play important roles in developing a great employer brand.

5.2 Spain

Participants discussed recruitment practices, social responsibility, and employer branding:

They defined recruitment as discovering and establishing a team that adds value and believes in the company's vision. They emphasised the necessity of attracting individuals who share the project's goals and values and contribute effectively to the team.

Employer branding is influenced by recruitment practices, which influence both employee attraction and retention. According to participants, non-monetary aspects such as flexibility, training, and a positive work atmosphere contribute to a great employer brand. They emphasised the importance of creating a sense of belonging and allowing people to speak their ideas.

Social responsibility added positive value to society beyond economic operations, considering societal repercussions and employee well-being. Participants emphasised the importance of ethical practices and the role of corporations in tackling social challenges.

Employer branding is heavily influenced by social responsibility. Companies with a significant social responsibility are more appealing to talent, particularly among younger generations who respect such activities. Being socially responsible is linked to retaining talent and preserving a positive image.

Employer branding has been defined as a company's perceived image as an employer. It encompasses the company's beliefs, culture, and distinguishing features.

Employee comments and former employees' opinions were deemed critical by participants for creating excellent employer branding. They emphasised the necessity of effectively conveying values, creating a positive work environment, and connecting the company's actions with its beliefs.

Participants indicated having control over career pages, social media activities, and applicant communication. They emphasised the necessity of good communication and alignment with company values to improve employer branding.

Participants acknowledged indirect influence on issues such as accolades and public perception. They emphasised the necessity of maintaining a positive culture, values, and identity to establish a credible and powerful employer brand.

In closing, the participants emphasised the importance of connecting recruitment practices and social responsibility programmes with the company's values to develop excellent employer branding. Effective communication, attractive work environments, and ethical practices are critical in attracting and retaining talent while developing a favourable image in the eyes of both existing and potential employees.

5.3 Slovenia

The employer brand includes the holistic treatment of employees from employment to departure, as well as the opinion of employees, potential employees and the employer's environment. It is important to build a positive reputation, create the company's identity and take care of the satisfaction and belonging of the employees.

Staffing includes the recruitment of new employees, the provision of adequately coordinated employment and the inclusion of employees in work activities and the promotion of their development. Taking care of employee satisfaction and motivation is crucial.

HR activities have a substantial impact on the employer brand. A transparent and efficient

recruitment process, creating a positive climate and belonging, and ensuring employee satisfaction and motivation contribute to the company's reputation.

Corporate social responsibility includes responsibility towards employees, the community and the environment, and responsible business operations following ethical principles. Concern for sustainable development and integrating social responsibility into the entire organisation is crucial.

Social responsibility has a substantial impact on employer branding. In this way, we attract talent and qualified candidates, strengthen the company's reputation and visibility, and increase the trust of other stakeholders. We build a positive perception and attractiveness as an employer.

5.4 Denmark

The employer brand includes the look and feel of the brand: logo, fonts, and tone of voice (marketing area). However, how do they relate to clients' stuff? All stakeholders! Are they consistent? Are they doing what they are saying? Clear communication - consistent and regular.

Recruitment is not only about finding the right employee. From the employees' perspective, it starts from the research stage, and only then it goes to sending a CV and going to interviews.

HR activities have a substantial impact on the employer brand. It should be recognisable starting from the tone of voice. How do they talk? How do they communicate? Do they live their values? It is never about the logo only. It is the image that the company has.

Corporate social responsibility includes responsibility towards employees, the community and the environment, and responsible business operations following ethical principles. Concern for sustainable development and integrating social responsibility into the entire organisation is crucial.

Social responsibility has a substantial impact on employer branding. Potential employees do their research. Moreover, they will find out if the company is only talking or if it reflects on their actions as well. It affects how potential employees see them.

Focus group members pointed out several times that it is always about communication. How you communicate and what you communicate directly impact the branding.

5.5 Italy

Participants in the discussion shared varied perspectives on recruitment practices and social responsibility, offering insights into how these aspects influence employer branding.

The understanding of recruitment ranged from a challenging process due to professionalism gaps and digitalisation to a transformation post-COVID, where remote recruiting became prevalent. Pre-COVID, small companies often employed unstructured recruitment methods with ethical concerns. Post-COVID, there is a shift towards improving recruitment processes and making companies more attractive to candidates.

Regarding employer branding, participants highlighted the potential negative impact of poorly executed recruitment practices, especially those involving AI. It was emphasised that companies need to align with applicants' values to maintain a positive image.

Views on social responsibility varied, with some participants feeling that many enterprises lack true social responsibility. Suggestions for social responsibility included attention to employees' well-being, flexibility, health, and environmental impact. Small businesses were noted to lag in social responsibility awareness.

In the context of employer branding, social responsibility was deemed to influence the perception of a company significantly. The discussion stressed the importance of companies showcasing their values and sustainability efforts to attract candidates.

Employer branding was described as a facet of business competition involving brand development and transparency. The importance of social media and effective communication in shaping employer branding was emphasised.

The participants highlighted crucial elements for solid employer branding, including data-driven decision-making, communication through social media, and a focus on employees. Three principal characteristics related to employer branding were explored: things under control, what participants do, and things they could influence. Social media management, communication efforts, and a focus on employee well-being emerged as key actions participants took.

In conclusion, the discussion underscored the interconnected nature of recruitment, social responsibility, and employer branding. Effective communication, alignment with values, and a positive workplace environment were identified as essential components for building and maintaining a strong employer brand. The impact of the digital age on recruitment practices necessitates ongoing adaptation and ethical considerations.

5.6 Norway

In the discussion on recruitment practices, participants highlighted the multifaceted nature of recruitment, including addressing turnover causes and challenging traditional views of diversity. The importance of employer branding was emphasised due to a labour shortage, focusing on proper behaviour, care for internal applicants, and active engagement with potential employees.

Participants noted social responsibility's dual role in company growth and employee replacement. Converting departing employees into ambassadors was a significant aspect of employer branding. Aligning sustainability and corporate social responsibility with employer branding was considered crucial.

In the context of employer branding, participants defined it broadly as everything a company does to make itself attractive to current and potential employees. The term, with potential American origins, was deemed valuable when filled with meaningful content. Key factors included fostering pride in work, creating positive workplace experiences, and supporting personal and professional development.

Principal characteristics related to employer branding involved providing tasks that employees find exciting, utilising their skills, and emphasising personal and professional development. Consistency in messaging and aligning employer branding with social responsibility goals were highlighted as essential for long-term success.

PART 3 – CASE STUDIES

WP2 – Activity 2.6

6 Case study: Social responsibility policy (Spain)

6.1 Introducing the Company

960 Pixels Comunicación SL. Unipersonal is a communication agency with different fields of work, with expertise in creating communication strategies and focused on brand and project identity. Initially, the company started performing in digital-related areas, essential in the existing market. Despite being a more usual business characteristic nowadays, since its inauguration, 960 Pixels Comunicación SL. Unipersonal has been setting a good example in terms of a company that combines both media communication and digital sector aspects in its services, which was not very common in the region of Aragon back in 2008 when companies usually chose between these two sectors as their primary focus.

Further reading: <https://960pixels.es/>

6.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

Since it was first inaugurated as a company, 960 Pixels Communication has constantly been launching projects related to sustainability in general, directly, or indirectly. As a result, the company has been receiving several different accreditations since it was born, such as the Sello de Calidad Comunicativa, which is a seal of communication quality awarded by the Colegio de Periodistas de Aragon, an association of Aragon's journalists, and the Sello Huella Fiscal, a seal given by Knowcosters foundation to promote transformative consumption habits and to certify the payment of taxes.

In terms of social responsibility primarily, the company has been awarded, for the first time in 2014, with the Sello del Plan de Responsabilidad Social de Aragón (RSA), a seal of social responsibility given by Aragon's government alongside other organisations to promote corporate social responsibility through the celebration of Aragonese companies and businesses that incorporate socially responsible practices and adopt values such as transparency, social and environmental commitment in their services.

6.3 960-pixel Communication: Social Responsibility Policy

Since 2008, when it was born, the company 960 Pixels Comunicación has launched all sorts of projects related to what can be denominated Corporate Social Responsibility as a result of recognising businesses and entrepreneurship as important elements of social development.

The company has created a concrete plan of CSR, also known as Corporate Social Responsibility, through which initiatives with social purposes have been boosted. Also, the company prioritises responsible brands and sponsors inclusive initiatives, measures that helped them achieve Aragon's Seal of Social Responsibility.

Furthermore, the company seeks to adapt their actions and characteristics to the Sustainable Development Goals, also known as SDGs. For example, more than 95% of the displacements related to the company's services are in the form of active mobility, and the workplace is in a coworking space built with recycled materials and bioconstruction. Both aspects are seen as elements to help make cities sustainable, which reflects the content of SDG 11.

In other words, the company has always tried to guide its development through sustainable criteria, not only for pure and hard work but also for all the actions that have to do with the corporate identity, including looking for suppliers with the sustainability commitment label.

With the passing of years, those actions have been expanded. Two other projects faithfully reflect how 960 Pixels Comunicación has tried to develop a socially responsible identity.

The first project is the sponsorship of El Gancho Club de fútbol, a football club with a very social purpose. Through sponsorships, the club covers registration fees of athletes, regardless of gender or age, whose families could not afford to pay for a federation card. 960 Pixels Comunicación collaborates on this project by financing some cards for the women's club and helping athletes practice their labour.

Another vital social project is the children's digital story library. It publishes illustrated stories for children on sensitive topics, gender issues, and many environmental issues. One of these stories was written and co-published by the company and talked about the responsible use of technology by parents and children. This also highlights the educational aspects of 960 Pixels' Communication's social responsibility.

In the future, 960 Pixels communication will reinforce its actions, always guided by the SDGs. Especially in one action in particular: the CSR that has to deal with the clients. Because of its size, there is a limited number of clients, and relations are strong, with confidence. However, it is essential to take a step back and let the client give feedback on the quality of the company's service. The seal of social responsibility given by Aragon's government will help the company to achieve this goal.

6.4 References

Inicio—960 Pixels. (n.d.). Retrieved 6 October 2023, from <https://960pixels.es/>
isabel. (2022, November 29). Qué es el sello RSA y cómo conseguirlo. *Sistemas de Calefacción LASIAN*.
<https://lasian.es/sello-rsa/>

7 Case Study: Health and well-being at the workplace (Spain)

7.1 Introducing the Company: El Azafrán

Inaugurated in 1994, Grupo Azaran is a formation centre and European project development centre. They work on projects related to the sectors of gastronomy, food, and culinary arts.

Within this training line, one of their specialities is gastronomy, cooking, and hospitality training. They also have a program open to the outside world, a proposal called gastro-health, which is related precisely to healthy eating in general and for companies. In addition, the company provides cooking training for the general public, especially for catering professionals.

Within the education line, the company has a cooking and catering school, and it offers cooking courses and workshops for various target groups (unemployed, amateurs, professionals).

Further reading: <https://elazafran.com/grupoazafran/>

7.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

Traditionally, the company would use mutual accident insurance as their main model of employers' health and well-being.

Nevertheless, the company has taken further and important steps to improve its employees' health and well-being.

These changes have transformed the company, and, for that, they have become part of a state foundation, La Fundación Restaurantes Sostenibles, and they have also been integrated into the Aragonese Network of Healthy Companies, which is also known by its acronym RED RAES.

In principle, on the part of belonging to the network of healthy companies, there have been no concrete outcomes yet because it has been a short period of time since the process of being integrated with the RED RAES was finalised, as the COVID-19 pandemic significantly delayed it.

Nonetheless, as a member of this particular network, the company has finally been awarded the designation and recognition as a member of a healthy company. Its directors are planning to keep adapting their models and techniques to improve their staff's health and well-being, as it can be safely assumed that this is an area where there will be more to be done.

7.3 Grupo Azafrán's Health and Well-Being

Although the mutual accident insurance company is maintained, other measures were taken to improve the company's employees' health and well-being, as it seemed appropriate for the company to be part of a club where other companies also follow the same principles in some way.

Therefore, along with the use of mutual accident insurance, which provides annual periodic check-ups for personnel who so wish, and the offering of talks, activities and workshops related to

prevention itself - and within the prevention, sporadically, including those related to food -the company has hired licenced health professionals for the team. It is also equipped with tools to be used by the team, such as a kitchen.

Together, those improvements have allowed the company to hold meetings throughout the year with its employees to discuss topics regarding healthy eating habits.

This is one of a few voluntary measures taken by that company that improves the whole work environment. First, it serves as a group dynamic exercise for the employees, but it also helps the company spread the ideas of healthy and sustainable eating habits worldwide.

In the future, the company will see how its health programme continues to evolve and adapt to what the Government of Aragon will indicate to them. Furthermore, there are also healthy national companies, a certain dynamism that Grupo Azafrán will follow, more in occupational risk prevention from the industrial point of view rather than healthy eating. However, it can be assumed that this area will be developed.

7.4 References

Grupo Azafrán. (n.d.). Retrieved 6 October 2023, from <https://elazafran.com/grupoazafran/>

8 Case study: Talent Management (Italy)

8.1 Introducing the Company.

Human Company, a Florentine group active in the hospitality and catering sectors and leader in Italy in open-air tourism, was founded in the 1980s as ECV Group from the entrepreneurial spirit of Cardini Vannucchi, a Tuscan family originally active in the textile sector in Prato. The turn towards the world of tourism came in 1982 with the acquisition of the first Il Girasole campsite in Figline Valdarno. The structure, transformed from a campsite of pitches for tents and caravans into an ultra-modern village set in more than 31 hectares of greenery with comfortable mobile homes, immediately became the winning formula replicated over the years in each of the group's villages.

Thanks to courageous acquisitions and investments and more than 35 years of experience, the group is now the leader in Italy in the outdoor accommodation sector with a wide and diversified tourist offer. Human Company has ten outdoor facilities, including villages and campsites in towns in Tuscany, Veneto, and Lazio, joined by the three latest-generation Plus Hostels in Florence, Berlin and Prague and the "Villa La Palagina" resort in the Chianti hills around Figline Valdarno.

Over the years, Human Company has diversified its business, flanking the hospitality sector with the catering sector, participating, among others, in developing the innovative "Mercato Centrale" format. Launched in 2014 in Florence in the historic San Lorenzo market and then replicated in Rome at Termini station, inside the Palafuksas in Turin in the heart of the historic Porta Palazzo district and the "I Gigli" shopping centre in Campi Bisenzio in the "Ai Banchi di Mercato Centrale" formula, Mercato Centrale represents a winning formula for enhancing Italian food and wine excellence. The idea came from Umberto Montano, a catering entrepreneur who has been involved in quality food for over forty years, who, together with the Cardini Vannucchi family, has generated a new language in the food sector that makes simplicity its greatest strength.

Further reading: <https://humancompany.com/>

8.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

"Timonieri di Human Company" is one of the most recent cases of companies that have focused on Talent Management in Italy by adopting Mentoring for the Management of internal resource development. This testifies that many companies still have to start with the basics of Mentoring.

The program started in 2017 due to the company's need to train future facility managers (campsites), conducting training and talent management internally because of an expansion of staff due to the opening of new facilities throughout Italy.

There are many applications of corporate mentoring, and recent years have seen the emergence in Italy of mentoring programmes to manage many talent management situations. However, when it comes to traditional applications, one sometimes risks seeing them as banal and uninteresting. Instead, before using Mentoring for science fiction, it is good to appreciate it in its most classic and powerful application.

When the company started the Mentoring programme for future executives, it was simultaneously planning to carry out a 're-branding' from 'Elite Club Vacanze' to its current name of 'Human company', precisely in order to emphasise internal and external (customers) human capital and to vigorously renew the company's image around the historical organisational values from which it originated. A family-run company to which Mentoring was suggested as an appropriate methodology to preserve the continuity of the corporate culture and values, which are the main glues of the sense of belonging to a group, in future top Management, particularly in the ability to cascade the 'why of the company' and expected behaviour at all levels, even before specific know-how.

8.2.1 The different phases

This case study is divided into different phases aiming at talent management through mentoring activities:

1. Elaboration of a shared "Vision, Mission, Values" document and description in behavioural terms of expected and desirable practices through Focus Groups
2. Identification of Mentors and Mentees: done by HR Department
3. Mentor training (initial and itinerary): Facility Managers (6 initial days, 2 in itinerary, 1 final)
4. Training of Mentees (high potentials identified by internal assessment tools) (1-day initial project orientation, 1 day in itinerary on good practice management and project realignment)
5. Project Orientation of Mentors and Mentees
6. Matching (Mentees chose Mentors): experiential training and action learning with sports games
7. One-to-one initiation and itinerary evaluation assistance with "Mentoring Project Tutors
8. Mentor and Mentee community of practice management: in the presence and via the company intranet platform
9. Final evaluation (through qualitative and quantitative evaluation system: Mentoring impact on Mentor, Mentee and Organisation).

The objectives of this case study are:

- To enhance talent management skills through the training of the Mentor figure.
- Training a group of managers to be used as "Mentor" trainers.
- Train young people and promote talent within the organisation.

This case study also aims to develop 'identity' content and 're-branding' and improve organisational communication, transmit mission values and managerial models, and create and develop internal professionalism and a sense of ownership.

8.2.2 Strengths and Achievements

Having a mentoring programme within an organisation is not easy. This must keep the company's routine intact. That is why it is always recommended to administer this programme during quiet periods rather than stressful ones.

In particular, this case study highlights many strengths from both the Mentor and Mentee perspectives, namely:

From the Mentors' point of view:

- Mutual trust - understanding - fairness in the relationship - self-esteem that reinforces my motivation to work
- A pleasure to teach/pass on
- Enthusiasm - ideas that can help the company with projects outside the company
- Empathy - esteem stimulus - personal history fundamental to understanding job aspirations
- Questioning
- Improved listening skills and focus on topics
- Usefulness towards the Company
- Mentor kit used to understand what to follow in one-to-one
- In addition to the possibility of career development, other aspects that enhance professionalism emerged in the course.
- Valuing in-house experience by transferring it to other company contexts.

From the Mentee's point of view:

- Attitude of mentors
- Relationship transparency, trust, respect, and empathy
- Dedicated time and complicity
- Ability to manage difficult moments
- Overcoming hierarchies
- Direct and open relationships, specific to work problems

An ex-post questionnaire was submitted to Mentors and Mentees on several typical evaluation variables on the impact of Mentoring.

On the part of the Mentees, the most significant result was that knowledge of company values increased considerably. Equally significantly, awareness of their role skills, leadership skills, role performance, personal and job satisfaction, work motivation, sense of belonging to the company, and organisational communication increased.

What is even more surprising is that almost the same results are recorded for Mentors, with a particular emphasis on the ability to transmit the company's mission, vision, and values. On awareness of one's own role skills, awareness of leadership skills, awareness of the exercise of the role, personal and job satisfaction, work motivation, sense of belonging to the company, feeling of having been given value for one's professional experience and organisational communication.

8.2.3 Conclusions

In this case study, it is reported that Mentoring is a methodology with great potential to 'systemise' internal expert competencies. However, even more so, it has excellent effectiveness in significantly increasing awareness and decreasing doubts.

8.3 References

CASO DI STUDIO: PROGETTO 'I TIMONIERI DI HUMAN COMPANY: Il Mentoring per il 'Talent Management' - Performant by SCOA. (2020, January 31). <https://performant.it/caso-di-studio-progetto-i-timonieri-di-human-company-il-mentoring-per-il-talent-management>

9 Case Study: Health and well-being in the workplace (Italy)

9.1 Introducing the Company: Mediaset Italia

Mediaset Italia is the Italian-language television channel that transmits abroad the best programmes of the main Mediaset channels (Canale 5, Italia 1, Rete 4 and La5).

The channel is aimed at the more than 60 million Italians living abroad and all those who love Italy, its culture and beauty.

In addition to the main prime-time programmes, the schedule offers all the best of entertainment, drama, entertainment, news, and sports programmes shortly after the Italian broadcast.

Mediaset S.p.A. is Italy's leading private media company.

9.2 The goals of the case study and the stakeholders

Each Company in the Mediaset Group has established a different corporate welfare system, always putting the needs of the employees at the forefront. Mediaset made the following actions to advance the welfare and well-being of its employees:

- Encourage employees to balance work and life
- Protect maternity leave, encourage postpartum employment, and provide benefits to employees
- Encourage workplace adaptability.
-

Mediaset listed several important topics in its 2018 Sustainability Report, including financial performance, customer happiness, ethical supplier management, and intellectual property protection. Promoting staff welfare and well-being stand out as a crucial practical concern for Mediaset among these.

In order to determine a company's most significant impacts, stakeholders must be contacted, and their reasonable expectations and interests must be considered. This is a crucial tenet of appropriately reported CSR / sustainability.

In this respect, Mediaset has been in contact with various stakeholders, such as:

Stakeholder Group
Investors, shareholders and financial community
Users and Customers
Employees
Suppliers, subcontractors
Artistic resources, business partners, Content suppliers
PA, government and control bodies
Trade unions
Sectoral organisations
University and research centres
Local Community
Media and opinion leaders

FIGURE 1: Key stakeholder groups Mediaset engages with⁷

9.3 The actions taken by Mediaset to promote employee welfare and well-being

To ensure employee welfare and well-being, Mediaset has taken different actions:

Promoting work-life balance for employees.

To help employees better manage their personal and professional lives, Mediaset's Mediacenter has been operating at the Milan and Rome headquarters for more than ten years. A section of the corporate grounds known as Mediacenter contains several practical services for enhancing the quality of life of Group employees. Mediacenter, which has a 3,000 square meter space, is regarded as one of Italy's most helpful and welcoming charity stores. The services are managed by outside providers chosen for their expertise in the relevant fields, and they include things like the following in the context of caring for people:

- medical centre, which provides the medical services of specialists from the San Raffaele Hospital to employees, free of charge
- fitness centre
- mini market
- laundry/tailoring repair services
- bank
- post office
- bookshop

⁷ <https://sustaincase.com/case-study-how-mediaset-promotes-employee-welfare-and-well-being/>

- travel agency
- para-pharmacy
- shopping area
- catering

Safeguarding maternity and return to work after childbirth.

Thanks to a significant corporate program called the Nursery, which has been open to employees' children up to the age of 3 since 2004, Mediaset protects maternity leave and postpartum employment. With this approach, parents can leave their kids in the care of qualified teachers while at work, saving them the time and money they would have otherwise spent on childcare.

Offering employee benefits

Social security and welfare payments are the primary types of perks planned for Mediaset Group employees in Italy. A supplemental health care plan, a 24-hour injury insurance policy, and a supplemental pension fund are available to all employees. Mediaset also ensures that all its employees will get mandatory maternity pay. In addition to these advantages, senior managers may also be eligible for corporate automobiles, life insurance, and permanent disability benefits due to illness.

Promoting workplace flexibility

By the demands and opportunities that define the television industry, Mediaset has consistently identified and put into place specific tools that make it easier to balance the time spent on personal and professional obligations. As a result, trade union organisations have developed, in agreements, various working hours that flexibly suit the demands of the company and the workforce. In particular, most employees can start working between 9.00 and 10.30 unless organisational units demand them to start earlier for operational reasons. At the same time, some staff in production sectors have a 7-hour rather than an 8-hour workday. A decrease in working hours is also typically granted to employees who seek it in all business areas, provided that the technical and organisational requirements are met, and the job permits it from an operational perspective. 85% of the 332 Mediaset Group employees who have received part-time contracts are women. Female employees who request a reorganisation of their working lives after returning from maternity leave frequently request reductions in working hours so they can have a few extra hours each day to devote to their personal lives.

9.4 References

GRI - Resource center. (n.d.). Retrieved 6 October 2023, from <https://www.globalreporting.org/how-to-use-the-gri-standards/resource-center/>

Case study: How Mediaset promotes employee welfare and well-being—SustainCase—Sustainability Magazine. (n.d.). Retrieved 6 October 2023, from <https://sustaincase.com/case-study-how-mediaset-promotes-employee-welfare-and-well-being/>

10 Case Study: External Communication (Slovenia)

10.1 Company description

Telekom Slovenije is the leading supplier of communication solutions in Slovenia and Southeast Europe. They also work on digital and multimedia content, system integration, the building and upkeep of telecommunications networks, cybersecurity, and other services like financial services, insurance, smart homes, smart cities, industrial solutions, and e-mobility, in addition to fixed and mobile communications and ICT solutions. While maintaining the most extensive and fastest network in Slovenia, the company works to create and apply cutting-edge technologies.

10.2 Human Resources Activities

As part of its hiring and talent acquisition processes, Telekom Slovenije employs a variety of human resources activities. These actions consist of the following:

- **Workforce Planning:** The business determines the kinds of positions and the number of people needed to fulfil them to achieve its objectives.
- **Posting of Jobs:** Telekom Slovenije posts job openings with comprehensive requirements and conditions on its website and recruitment portals, enabling interested applicants to apply for the positions.
- **Process for selection and recruiting:** The HR department of the business handles selection and recruiting. This entails conducting interviews, using behavioural and HR questionnaires, and determining whether or not individuals are qualified for the position.
- **Upkeep of Unselected Candidate Records:** Telekom Slovenije keeps a list of unemployed candidates for potential future employment chances. This makes it possible for future workforce requirements to be filled more quickly.
- **Contract Preparation and Administrative Steps:** Following the selection of a candidate, the business creates the proper employment contract and completes all required administrative steps, including enrolling the employee in the social security system and creating payment documentation.
- **Onboarding:** New hires go through a process of onboarding after being hired. The employee will be trained for job performance during this phase, which also involves familiarising them with their duties and the company's policies and procedures.

Telekom Slovenije also uses a method for awarding its staff members, which entails the following actions:

- **Cash Incentives:** The organisation offers cash incentives to employees following their contributions, skills, and duties. Monthly incentives, commissions, or bonuses are just a few examples of financial incentives that might be given.
- **Non-Financial Rewards:** Besides financial incentives, the organisation uses non-financial incentives like praise for accomplishments, gratitude, and personal growth. These benefits encourage employee motivation and support increased commitment and satisfaction.

Telekom Slovenije tracks the number of key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of its HR procedures. For various HR procedures, some key performance indicators are as follows:

- **Recruitment Process:** Number of applications received, number of recently signed contracts, the time elapsed between the posting of a job and contract signature, and rate of successful

- onboarding.
- Process for rewarding: employee productivity, new client acquisition rate, customer satisfaction, and the number of individual employee actions.
- Process of training and development: error reduction, employee engagement in training initiatives, training time allotted, and the average number of sessions per employee.
- The process for employee development includes employee evaluations, yearly performance reviews, career plans, identifying essential personnel and those with high potential, and idea recognition.
- Employee Turnover: The number of departing employees and the average estimated workforce.

10.3 Practises for Corporate Social Responsibility

Telekom Slovenije is dedicated to CSR and employs several strategies that support long-term growth and care for the environment, workers, community, and society. Some special CSR procedures used by the business include:

- Environmental Protection: Telekom Slovenije works to lessen its influence on the environment by putting in place measures to save energy, cut greenhouse gas emissions, encourage resource efficiency, and guarantee ethical waste management. Additionally, they aid initiatives to protect cultural and ecological heritage, such as the Sečoveljske Soline Landscape Park.
- Telekom Slovenije encourages social inclusion and diversity among its employees and business areas. The business strongly emphasises equal opportunities and fosters a diverse workplace that values differences in gender, race, age, and handicap. Additionally, they back policies and projects that advance equality and social harmony.
- Digital Inclusion: Telekom Slovenije is dedicated to closing the digital divide and ensuring everyone has access to the benefits of digitisation. Particularly in disadvantaged areas, they invest in infrastructure and programmes that offer access to digital technology and skills. Furthermore, the company also provides educational programmes to improve digital literacy among different populations, such as children, seniors, and underserved communities.
- Community Involvement: Telekom Slovenije actively participates in regional communities through various projects and alliances. They support social welfare initiatives, sporting events, cultural activities, and educational endeavours. In addition, the business promotes community involvement and volunteerism among its staff members to help them develop a sense of responsibility and belonging to society.
- Telekom Slovenije upholds high ethical standards in all aspects of its business operations. An ethics code governs their behaviour and relationships with stakeholders. The business actively supports anti-corruption policies and fair competition because it values honesty, openness, and accountability. Additionally, they guarantee adherence to pertinent rules and legislation.

10.4 Employer brand-strengthening strategies.

Telekom Slovenije thoroughly approaches corporate social responsibility and human resources initiatives. The organisation attracts and keeps exceptional people while promoting social progress and sustainable growth, from hiring and talent acquisition through rewarding procedures and CSR practices. Telekom Slovenije is a leader in the telecommunications sector by prioritising employee development, environmental stewardship, social inclusion, and ethical business practices. In addition, Telekom Slovenije uses several techniques to enhance its employer brand and attract top people. It uses a range of HR initiatives, including workforce planning, open job advertising, a strict hiring procedure, talent pool management, efficient onboarding, and ongoing employee development. These initiatives demonstrate the business's dedication to fostering a supportive work environment and allowing staff members to advance their careers.

Telekom Slovenije monitors several key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the efficacy of its HR practices. These KPIs include turnover rates, staff appraisals, training and development, employee awards, and hiring procedures. As a result, the business receives important insights into the effectiveness and impact of its HR activities by keeping an eye on these metrics.

Telekom Slovenije has also established a procedure for recognising and awarding staff. This includes giving financial rewards depending on contributions, aptitudes, and work output. The organisation also strongly emphasises non-cash incentives like appreciation, personal development, and acknowledgement since they help employees stay motivated and committed to their jobs.

Moreover, as already indicated, Telekom Slovenije shows a significant commitment to CSR. The business prioritises environmental conservation by implementing policies to conserve energy, cut emissions, and advance moral waste management. Additionally, it prioritises digital inclusion, community involvement, social inclusion, and ethical business practices. These CSR programmes support long-term development, environmental protection, and a favourable reputation within the sector.

By building a positive work atmosphere, offering chances for advancement, and exhibiting a dedication to CSR through these tactics, Telekom Slovenije presents itself as an employer of choice. In addition, these initiatives strengthen the employer brand, attracting talented people who share the company's values and objectives.

Note:

This case study was produced within the ISSBS's master's course Human Capital Management by the following students: Amela Brajljeh, Irena Rozenfeld Tabaković, Mojca Bombek, Lara Savski, Gregor Mišmaš under the supervision of Alenka Brod and Valerij Dermol.

11 Case Study: Finding Company Fit (Slovenia)

11.1 Description of the Company

One of the biggest manufacturers in Europe, BSH Home Appliances Ltd. is a market leader in the manufacture of home appliances. The organisation works to enhance people's lives worldwide with its top brands, cutting-edge goods, and excellent solutions. The business prioritises the requirements of each user and works to develop resource-efficient, ecologically friendly solutions.

The company's users are at the core of its operations, and this serves as its ambitious concept. Their primary goal is to improve users' lives everywhere by creating cutting-edge home products. They use cutting-edge technology to produce products of the highest quality while using fewer resources. In order to accomplish these objectives, the company's personnel are essential. They are outstanding people who value innovation, are globally connected, are not afraid to take risks, and are prepared to learn from their errors.

The foundation of the company culture is the idea of "One team," which refers to creating a cohesive team culture. The business wants its employees to work together, be friendly, have excellent attitudes, and be committed. In addition, the organisation wants to be the top choice for customers, and they do this by offering excellent goods and services.

The company's ideals have a significant role in inspiring personnel. All personnel in the organisation are taught to uphold values, including commitment, accountability, pragmatism, ambition, positivism, teamwork, trust, generosity, and respect. These principles are the cornerstone of the business's success and help foster a supportive work environment.

Around 2,000 people work for BSH Home Appliances Ltd., including 250 indirect workers who provide production support services. Three departments comprise the company's organisational structure: the director of technology, the director of business administration, and the director of sales, marketing, and customer support. Within the company, each sector is responsible for, administers, and leads its own job.

The corporation has several divisions: technology departments, business administration, sales, marketing, and customer support. Product development, quality control, environmental protection, and technical support are the main priorities of the technology department. The business administration division has planning, logistics, human resources, operational management, and control divisions. Product promotion, marketing, customer services, and customer support are within the purview of the Sales, Marketing, and Customer Support Departments.

BSH Home Appliances Ltd. collaborates with partners, suppliers, distributors, and other value-chain players to achieve its objectives. As a result, the company expands its market potential and maintains its position as a leader in the home appliance industry thanks to its innovation and vision.

11.2 Overview of the hiring procedure

In the organisation, recruitment and selection are crucial procedures that guarantee the proper choice of job candidates and their fit for their positions. The selection and recruitment process includes the essential actions and strategies listed below.

Understanding job needs and criteria: It is essential for the business to precisely describe the needs and requirements for a particular position before starting the selection process. This includes determining the duties, obligations, skills, and qualifications required for effective job performance.

Job posting and advertising: The organisation posts job openings via relevant channels, including social media, business websites, internal message boards, and online job boards. The job description and business information are both presented in the advertisement in explicit detail.

Application review: Following the application deadline, the business examines the papers submitted supporting the applications, including resumes, cover letters, references, etc. Candidates that do not fit the bill are disqualified at this point.

Interviewing: Individual or group interviews with the shortlisted candidates may be conducted. The candidate's competencies, motivation, work history, personality qualities, etc., are assessed during the interview. It is critical to ask pertinent questions that help learn more about a candidate's skills and fit with the organisation.

Reference checking: Following interviews, references might be checked. In this process, the candidate's prior employers or other pertinent contacts are contacted to confirm facts, gain more insight, and evaluate the candidate's past performance and behaviour.

Evaluation and selection: The Company examines applicants' suitability for the position based on interviews, reference checks, and other assessment procedures. This assessment considers the candidate's credentials, abilities, experience, cultural fit, and alignment with the business's values. The best-qualified applicant for the position is chosen in the end.

Offer and negotiation: The employer makes a job offer after choosing a candidate. This offer includes information about the position's salary, benefits, start date, and other pertinent terms and conditions. At this point, negotiations may occur to reach a mutually agreeable conclusion.

Onboarding and integration: The onboarding procedure starts when the candidate accepts the offer. This entails acquainting the new hire with the business's rules, practises, expectations, and culture. Next, the person is welcomed into the team, given the required tools and resources, and assisted in adjusting to their new position and the company.

Continuous improvement and performance evaluation: BSH Home Appliances Ltd. understands the value of continuous improvement and performance evaluation to support the development and success of its workers. The organisation offers professional promotion, skill development, and lifelong learning opportunities. In addition, regular performance reviews and feedback sessions are held to evaluate employee performance, establish goals, and pinpoint areas for development.

Engagement and retention: The business places a high priority on keeping its brilliant team happy and motivated. Several tactics are used, such as work-life balance initiatives, recognition and awards programmes, opportunities for growth, competitive pay and benefits packages, and a supportive workplace culture that encourages collaboration and innovation.

11.3 Employer branding strategies

BSH Home Appliances Ltd. uses a thorough hiring procedure to find, hire, and keep staff members who share its values, are qualified and skilled, and are committed to helping the business achieve its objectives. The business emphasises the value of teamwork, a healthy work environment, and cultural fit in building a thriving organisational culture. BSH Home Appliances Ltd. works to create a skilled and motivated workforce that fosters innovation and provides first-rate goods and services to its clients all over the world through efficient recruitment and selection procedures, ongoing training, and employee engagement programmes. By doing this, BSH Home Appliances Ltd. uses several tactics to enhance its employer brand and guarantee the hiring of skilled and devoted personnel. The business puts the interests of its customers first and concentrates on developing modern, resource-conserving household appliances. It encourages risk-taking, creativity, global connectedness, and the ability to learn from mistakes in its employees. The company's culture is based on the idea of "One team," which promotes a cooperative and welcoming workplace. The ideals upheld by BSH Home Appliances Ltd. direct staff behaviour and foster a friendly environment. The organisation uses a thorough hiring process that includes understanding job requirements, posting jobs, reviewing applications, conducting interviews, checking references, evaluating candidates, and making a final decision. New personnel undergo an entire onboarding procedure and ongoing performance review after being chosen. Through initiatives to promote work-life balance, recognition programmes, career development opportunities, competitive pay, and a positive workplace environment, BSH Home Appliances Ltd. strongly emphasises engagement and retention. With these tactics, BSH Home Appliances Ltd. hopes to find, keep, and grow a talented and enthusiastic workforce that will help it succeed in offering high-quality goods and services to customers worldwide.

Note: This case study was produced within the ISSBS's master's course Human Capital Management by the following students: Dado Brković, Tanja Kovač, David Krejić, and Sara Zakrajšek under the supervision of Alenka Brod and Valerij Dermol

12 Case study: Recruitment process (Greece)

12.1 Introducing the Company

APIVITA is a company created by two pharmacists, pioneers in sustainable development, offering effective natural products for the face, body, and hair.

Further reading: <https://www.apivita.com/>

12.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

APIVITA got certified as a “Great Places to Work” in an institution that officially certifies the company’s professional experience and working environment as an excellent choice in the market and, above all, in the conviction of its own employees.

APIVITA’s commitment to regularly considering its stakeholders’ and employees’ expectations and needs is paramount. Following are mentioned the activities made by APIVITA for its employees:

- Performance appraisal process, annually.
- Induction process for new recruits, whenever there is a new employee hired.
- Meetings (project teams, skip level meetings with the CEO, general assembly, etc.), Daily / weekly/monthly / annually.
- Telephone contact/email daily.
- Employee satisfaction survey/ Employee stress survey, annually/every two years.
- Newsletter, monthly.
- Interviews with departing employees, as applicable.
- IDEA Bank Project is open year-round.

Meritocracy and transparency in making objective decisions are particularly important to APIVITA and constitute the foundation of the company’s operation. All decisions are based on documented policies developed according to the company’s culture and needs.

Policies and procedures are communicated and accessible to all Company employees, thus ensuring objectivity and high-level internal communications. All the policies are available on File Server, a shared folder accessible to all employees since it functions as an intranet for the organisation. In particular, the following policies and procedures are in place:

Policies	Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & selection policy. • Salary & benefits policy. • Performance evaluation policy. • Training policy. • Absence management policy. • Expense report policy. • Company vehicle policy. • Mobile phone policy. • Remote work policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & selection procedure. • Performance evaluation procedure. • Training procedure. • Annual leave application procedure. • Sick leave procedure. • Expenses report procedure. • Remote work procedure.

To achieve the above, the Human Resources Department comprises experienced executives with academic education and specialisation in human resources.

12.2.1 The hiring and recruiting processes.

The new employee search, selection, and recruitment procedure is an actual test for APIVITA. Therefore, the following procedure is in place to ensure transparency and to strengthen the successful recruitment indicator.

With the opening of a job vacancy, whether this constitutes the creation of a new position or the replacement of an existing position, the head of the department in question must fill in the form “Job Vacancy Filling Form”, stating the reasons for the filling, the required qualifications, the job specifications, and the time within which it needs to be filled. Once this form is signed by the head, the COO and the Human Resources Manager, the Recruiter prepares the advert and posts the job.

To better manage the “Recruitment & Selection Procedure”, APIVITA has invested in the Workable tracking platform. This tool operates as an application submission and CV retention database and a vital reference tool for the whole process.

Aiming to access highly qualified candidates, APIVITA has created a multichannel search and selection network. A job vacancy can be filled in four different ways:

- **Candidate’s response to an advert** (via APIVITA Career Page, LinkedIn, Justjobs, Career Pages: kariera.gr, Glassdoor, Careerjet, Jooble).
- **Employee’s referral** via the Referral Program.
- **Internal transfer:** APIVITA Rising Star Bees.
- **Career Fairs** (Career Fair 4All, Job Fair Athens, iMBA, Athens University of Economics and Business Career Fair).

Regardless of the source the candidates come from, they are all treated with the same objective criteria, which concern the avoidance of discrimination to gender, religion, and sexual orientation, but are related to the basic criteria for filling the respective job vacancy.

Every job position comprises a three-step interview. One interview with the Recruiter, one with the line manager and a final interview with the respective department manager. The interviews have been structured according to the competency-based model, which the company has created based on basic skills necessary for each APIVITA employee and the respective skills defined according to the job position based on literature. To this end, a complete interview guide follows based on the specific skills per job vacancy and the skills we would like all APIVITA employees to have.

Indicatively, but not exhaustively, APIVITA mentions some of the skills that are also considered in the annual performance evaluation:

- Communication.
- Team spirit.
- Programming & Organisation.
- Initiative.
- Adaptability.

At the end of each evaluation stage, the evaluator evaluates the candidate on a balanced scorecard based on the above skills.

The employee's annual performance evaluation is also considered in case of an internal transfer. If a candidate is selected through the Referral Program, it is considered that the employee made a successful referral and is rewarded by the company. Upon completion of the procedure, a Collaboration Proposal is forwarded to the candidate, which states the salary package and the desired starting date. The journey of joining the company begins upon acceptance of the collaboration proposal.

APIVITA has created a structured recruitment program. Upon the employee's recruitment, he/she receives the following from the Human Resources Department:

- **Required recruitment documents** (recruitment notification form, work contract, job description, forms for inclusion in the group insurance plan, and work regulations).
- Welcome gift comprising of an APIVITA product package.
- **Induction kit material** (which includes information about all the organisation's benefits, useful telephone numbers, etc.).

This is followed by corporate and product training, which lasts one week. On the first day at the company, the employee learns about its history, philosophy, values, and activities; the employee is toured through the company's modern facilities, the laboratories, the botanical garden, and the beehives; he/she comes in contact with the Human Resources Department and is informed about all the company's actions and receives detailed information about the company's benefits. Once the employee has completed the corporate training, they receive an in-depth, four-day training course on all the product categories.

Having completed the Induction Week, the employee is inducted into a team where he/she will receive structured on-the-job training, filling in a training form handed over to the Human Resources Department upon completing the on-the-job training. The employee is now officially a member of the APIVITA family. Important details concerning the selection-induction procedure include the following:

- The selection procedure is done internally by the Human Resources Department. Headhunters are not involved.
- 99% of the organisation's contracts refer to indefinite-term contracts.
- 99% of the APIVITA employees are employed under a full-time scheme.
- All employees are paid a salary that is above the national base salary.

Throughout the entire employee selection and induction procedure, APIVITA places great emphasis on the Candidate Experience; this is why it provides comprehensive feedback to candidates who are rejected for a job position, which includes accurate rejection reasons, while those who arrive at the company's headquarters receive an Interview gift and Thank you card following the interview to show how vital each candidate is for the company and to thank them for the time that they dedicated to visiting the facilities.

12.2.2 APIVITA's internal Grading system and training

Benefits – Provisions

The salaries and benefits provided to APIVITA employees are based on the position level on our internal Grading system, thus ensuring meritocracy and transparency for all. This system has been developed following the diligent and detailed mapping of the company's existing work roles and the thorough combined research for the benefits of the same roles in companies of similar activity.

The salaries and benefits provided to APIVITA employees are independent of any form of distinction and fall under two major categories: basic and those concerning the working environment and career opportunities. The Human Resources Department's strategic goal is to expand the list of benefits that address all employees constantly. For example, by renovating the company's restaurant, Management committed to providing a monthly meal card for 2020 for those based at the APIVITA headquarters. Concerning the basic benefits, these include:

- Competitive salary package.
- Private group insurance package.
- Discount policy for all the APIVITA & Uriage products.
- Company bus for the employees' arrival and departure.
- Free parking.

In addition, a plethora of career and working environment benefits are provided:

- Continuous education and training.
- Career development.
- Movement opportunities in Greece and abroad.
- Flexible working hours (flexible arrival time 08:30-10:30)
- Ability to work remotely.
- Coffee stations.
- Participation in Corporate Social Responsibility activities.
- Corporate Events (Christmas & Summer Party, children's events).
- Personalised birthday present and company welcoming gift.
- Gift vouchers for baby items when an employee has a baby and a bodysuit with a specially designed logo by the Company's Art Director
- New Year's raffles and good luck charms.
- Easter candles.
- SPA and hair salon services.
- Trip to Greece and abroad as a reward for participation in a corporate idea bank competition.
- Summer Camp for the employees' children.
- Corporate sports teams.
- Gifts to celebrate special days worldwide (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Women's Day, Book Day, etc.).
- Gift vouchers for school items.
- Team Bonding activities.

In cases where the company role or position (grade) justifies it, additional benefits such as monthly or annual target achievement bonuses, corporate care, travel expenses, mobile phone, laptop, tablet, meal cards, etc., are provided.

Education/Training

The employees' lifelong learning and growth were their priority in 2019. Overall, 11,631 training person-hours were conducted for in-house and external training, with all employees from all departments participating. At APIVITA, training comes under the "BEE Better" umbrella and is encountered in all aspects of everyday life. It starts with a thorough Induction, as described above.

Besides this basic training, numerous individual training programs are organised annually. The design of the annual training plan starts with the training needs that emerge during the performance evaluation procedure and from the one-on-one meetings conducted with team leaders at the beginning of the year. Our training actions usually concern:

- On-the-job seminars, workshops, or conferences.
- Long-term programs (postgraduate study programs, specialisation diplomas).
- Learning foreign languages.
- Strengthening of IT skills.
- Personal self-improvement training (time and stress management, project management, etc.).
- Training on team management issues (providing feedback, goal setting, dispute management, motivation, etc.).
- Training on health and safety issues (building evacuation, fire safety, provision of first aid).
- Well-being Training Seminars (dietary advice, yoga sessions, quitting smoking).

Depending on the type and topic of the program, it may be conducted internally by the corresponding training team or, in collaboration with an external associate or via their e-learning platform. Regarding general interest and topic training programs, APIVITA encourages employees from the company's various departments to participate to get to know one another better, exchange opinions and learn from one another.

The company fully funds all the programs its employees participate in, while colleagues receive extra compensation for participating in training programs outside their working hours. To ensure the best outcome, both its Markopoulo facilities and the Experience Store in Kolonaki have specially designed training rooms with all the necessary audio-visual equipment.

12.3 References

APIVITA Natural Cosmetics | Natural Beauty Skincare, Hair & Body. (n.d.). Retrieved 6 October 2023, from <https://www.apivita.com/>

13 Case Study: Social Responsibility Policy (Greece)

13.1 Introducing the Company: Papastratos

Papastratos is the largest tobacco products company in Greece.

Further reading: <https://www.pmi.com/markets/greece/el/about-us/overview> & <https://www.papastratosmazi.gr/>

13.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

The company contributes to the Greek society and the country. Its corporate social responsibility program, representing an expenditure of more than EUR 1.5 million through 2009-2016, aims to provide vulnerable social groups relief from the economic crisis. Papastratos has implemented programs in collaboration with various NGOs such as Apostoli, Praxis, Desmos, and Shedia.

The people of Papastratos are critical to its success. Through constant investment in employees' career development, Papastratos provides competitive salaries and benefits, international career opportunities, and a modern working environment. Papastratos has been recognised as a Great Place to Work by the Great Place to Work Institute Hellas for three years (2012-2014) and as a Top Employer by the Top Employers Institute (2015 and 2016). Papastratos also received two golden awards for employees' development plans from the HR Awards.

13.3 Papastratos' Social Responsibility

Papastratos has created another website dedicated only to its social responsibility policies. There are three main social responsibility pillars of Papastratos:

- Society.
- Environment.
- People.

Papastratos implements many social responsibility programs. One of them that is of utmost importance and manages to attract employees is the one towards **diversity & inclusion**.

At Papastratos, talent, career, and skills are genderless, and stereotypes have no place. Something that is confirmed by the company's female factory workers who claim that in Papastratos, clichés and work in the traditionally "male-dominated" field of production are overcome. All employees need to grow and build their dream career is a willingness to learn, problem-solving skills and the ability to get his/her "hands dirty". This is the central conclusion from talking to employees at Papastratos' state-of-the-art factory in Aspropyrgos. Gender does not seem to play any role in the equation, as it should in any workplace.

Employees at Papastratos find an inclusive working environment that allows them to show and develop their skills, for which the company is consistently awarded annually. At the same time, they are a living example that opens the door wide for the following women who wish to work in the industrial sector. This mentality is a natural result of a universal culture of equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

Papastratos is the first Company in Greece to receive the 2018 international certification Equal Salary, ensuring equal opportunities and pay between men and women, which this year updated for the third consecutive year. It is a culture in which male workers/employees at the factory firmly believe, from the very first moment, embracing women workers/employees as equal team members and making sure to help them organically integrate into the new environment.

Proving that ensuring equal opportunities for all employees at every stage, from recruitment and skills development to career progression, has rightly been the cornerstone of Papastratos' working environment for years and the reason why it is consistently an employer of choice. The reality of being a female worker at the Papastratos factory in 2021 has nothing to do with outdated notions that physical strength or stamina plays a role in how well anyone can do their job.

Equality, as is evident from the above, is a fundamental principle that not only the company but also its employees themselves believe deeply in and serve consistently. Equality extends to the issue of remuneration, as Papastratos is the first Company in Greece to receive the international Equal Salary certification already in 2018. A fact for women employees in production is not only essential and fair but also self-evident, always based on the company's general philosophy. An employee must be judged based on gender, neither in terms of salary nor in terms of general development in the organisation. Both female and male employees take this for granted based on Papastratos' philosophy and working practices.

It is worth noting that Papastratos sets specific targets for the representation of women at all levels of the organisation. In addition, it ensures that the gender balance of candidates for each new position is respected, designs development programmes intending to achieve balanced participation of male and female employees and implements programmes to combat prejudice. At Papastratos, not only do careers and ambition have no gender, but they also have no limits. Papastratos is always ready to welcome new members based solely on their value.

13.4 References

Papastatos. Retrieved 25 May 2023, from <https://www.pmi.com/markets/greece/el/about-us/overview> & <https://www.papastratosmazi.gr/>

14 Case study: Talent Management (Norway)

14.1 Introducing the company - FuglesangDahl

2007 was the year Erling Fuglesang and Sten Rudi Dahl founded FuglesangDahl, one of Innherred's largest contractors today. They pride themselves on broad experience and a high level of professional expertise. They have worked on many large turnkey contracts but also learned to take good care of individual customers, both large and small, private, and public. Today, there are over 100 employees in administration, carpenters, painters, concrete workers, and warehouse/logistics.

They offer all types of carpentry and joinery work, such as new builds and extensions, and renovating houses and cabins. They also take care of smaller jobs, such as replacing windows and doors and interior and exterior painting.

FuglesangDahl also has Miljøfyrtårn® certification, which means they actively work towards a sustainable, greener future, incorporating environmental policies into their company vision.

Further reading:

<https://fuglesangdahl.no/>

<https://www.miljofyrtarn.no/>

14.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

FuglesangDahl's talent management strategy is defined by its commitment to apprenticeships and employee development. They believe in nurturing their workforce, focusing on internal talent growth, and providing opportunities for their employees to learn and advance in their respective fields.

14.2.1 The different phases

FuglesangDahl aims to become Innherred's preferred contractor, ensuring all employees work towards a common goal and making daily meaningful, comfortable, and predictable. Most of their employees come through job boards, postings, and apprenticeship programs.

1. Onboarding with company values, rules, routines, safety system, administration information and documentation, and meeting key people at FuglesangDahl.
2. Get the necessary work clothes, protective gear, tools, and whichever special adaptations the new hire needs.
3. Get familiar with the project the new employee will be working on, visit the project site and your teammates/coworkers working on the same project.
4. Six months trial period with two sets of follow-up conversations, where the employer evaluates the new hire, and the new hire has their evaluation of their efforts, the business, and the onboarding process.

It is crucial to FuglesangDahl that the employees have all the courses and skills they need to work safely and securely on their construction sites. Together with the employee, they review all the skills and courses the employee already has and assess which courses they need to complete soon after

starting work. Safety on construction sites is a high priority to the business, and they make sure that the employees are offered updates and maintenance of their courses and skills so that they always have the newest skills when they go to work during the day.

They are heavily invested in their employees' safety and health as part of their environmental policies. They look to the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages. All employees at FuglesangDahl are followed up by Bedriftshelsetjenesten (Occupational health services), providing courses and tests to identify the employee's needs and provide healthy, balanced foods at the workplace.

Further reading:

<https://www.arbeidstilsynet.no/en/hse-cards/roller-i-hms-arbeidet/occupational-health-services/>

14.2.2 Strengths and Achievements

They make sure to reward efficient employees with a financial bonus.

A good bonus program should be positive for the company and the employee. It encourages everyone to pull in the same direction, towards better results and development, in the short and long term. The bonus is calculated based on the number of hours saved per calculation. The bonus ensures a smooth workflow in all processes at the facility and works as a great motivator.

FuglesangDahl makes sure that employees have opportunities to develop themselves professionally and personally.

15 Case Study: Finding the Company Fit (Norway)

15.1 Introducing the company: NTE

NTE is a Trøndelag-based renewable and telecommunication company with 567 employees. The company serves 73,000 telecom customers in Trøndelag alone and about 93,200 electricity customers. It is owned by 19 municipalities in former Nord-Trøndelag, reflecting a strong local commitment. NTE operates in four business areas: Energy, Market, Telecom, and Electrical Services.

NTE has a strong EVP that focuses on creating a future-oriented work environment, engages with the local community, and is committed to sustainability. The company's promise of making Trøndelag "climate-neutral and digital" resonates with employees who are enthusiastic about renewable energy and technological innovation. Their values of being "open, close, and reliable" also play into the type of candidates they seek.

Further reading: <https://nte.no/om-nte/?ref=nav>

15.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

NTE relies on a multi-pronged talent acquisition strategy centred around its EVP. With a commitment to making Trøndelag "climate-neutral and digital," the EVP serves as a cornerstone in identifying skilled candidates who align with the company's ethics.

Before launching any recruitment drives, they focus on identifying its needs, challenges, and opportunities regarding employee alignment. This involves thoroughly evaluating the skill sets required across different business units and understanding how these align with their broader sustainability and innovation goals.

Based on the initial assessment, targeted recruitment drives, and internal programs are launched. These include:

1. Campus drives focusing on engineering, technology, marketing, economics, and leadership majors/education.
2. Partnerships with local organisations for mid-career reskilling programs.
3. Internal mentorship programs to align current employees with evolving company goals.

They then use a series of metrics to evaluate the success of their approach:

Skill Alignment

NTE relies on quantitative measures like qualifications and certifications to assess technical competency. By aligning such metrics with their EVP, NTE ensures the candidates are technically fit and coordinated with the company's future-forward and sustainability-oriented approach.

Cultural Fit

During the hiring process, NTE employs various assessment tools, like personality and situational judgment tests. Interviews often include scenario-based questions that give insights into a candidate's problem-solving capabilities, team spirit, and alignment with the company's values of being "open, close, and reliable."

Retention Rates

By tracking the longevity of new hires, NTE can assess if employees are indeed a good “company fit” beyond just initial impressions and qualifications. A high retention rate indicates that employees are engaged, committed, and well-aligned with the company’s values and goals.

15.3 Strengths and Achievements

By aligning these metrics with its EVP, NTE has succeeded in recruiting candidates who are not just technically proficient but also culturally and socially aligned with the company’s vision. Some of the results can be shown in the 6.1% sick leave the company has.

Tangible Benefits

1. Lower turnover rates
2. High employee engagement scores
3. Alignment with sustainability goals, as evidenced by increased participation in company-led sustainability initiatives

Intangible Benefits

1. Improvement in company culture
2. Strengthening of the NTE brand image among prospective hires and the broader community

NTE’s approach to its EVP has made its talent acquisition more efficient and meaningful. The candidates they bring on board are not merely employees but become ambassadors for NTE’s vision for a more sustainable and connected Trøndelag, maintaining its good reputation.

15.4 References

FuglesangDahl AS - Din lokale entreprenør på Innherred. (n.d.). FuglesangDahl. Retrieved 6 October 2023, from <https://fuglesangdahl.no/>

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Occupational health services (OHS). (n.d.). Retrieved 6 October 2023, from <https://www.arbeidstilsynet.no/en/hse-cards/roller-i-hms-arbeidet/occupational-health-services/>

16 Case Study: Recruitment Process (Denmark)

16.1 Introducing the Company

Established as a beacon of travel ingenuity in the Nordic region, **Amitylux Tours** offers more than just sightseeing — it promises genuine experiences. With a reputation for transforming classic tours into extraordinary adventures, this multi-award-winning agency crafts tailor-made experiences for travellers in iconic cities like Copenhagen, Stockholm, Oslo, and Helsinki.

Whether unveiling architectural marvels, navigating quaint streets and alleys, or providing opulent experiences with private jets and drivers, Amitylux ensures that every journey is distinctive. It is not just about seeing the Nordics but about immersing oneself in its soul. Moreover, to achieve this level of unparalleled service, the company's recruitment strategy plays an undeniable role.

16.2 The Challenge: Efficient Recruitment Across Borders for Micro-Companies

Amitylux, a nimble micro-company operating seasonally across major Nordic cities, finds itself in the competitive landscape of hiring diverse roles - from freelance tour guides to marketing support. The unique challenges posed by international operations and the constant drive to uphold the brand's esteemed reputation make every recruitment cycle crucial.

Competing in a Dominant Market: More prominent organisations with substantial budgets primarily monopolise the recruitment space. These giants have the advantage of extensive reach and resources, which often overshadow smaller companies like Amitylux. The art is finding the right candidates and ensuring the brand's gold standard is consistently reflected in every hire across borders.

The Essential Role of Technology and Automation: For Amitylux, whose recruitment undertakings are chiefly steered by the company's founder, the tools of automation and standardisation are not mere conveniences - they are indispensable. Micro-companies operating internationally face an array of challenges:

1. **Diverse Cultural Nuances:** Different regions have their own cultural, linguistic, and operational norms. Leveraging technology helps bridge these gaps, ensuring uniformity in the recruitment process.
2. **Time and Resource Constraints:** Unlike their larger counterparts, micro-companies often operate with limited resources. Automation significantly reduces manual efforts, ensuring that the process remains seamless and efficient even with a tight budget.
3. **Standardised Evaluation:** Implementing technology ensures a standardised evaluation method, enabling fair and consistent assessment of candidates from various backgrounds and regions.

The Power of Visual Evaluation - Tour Guide Video Submissions: Introducing video submissions in the recruitment process, especially for roles like tour guides, offers multiple benefits:

1. **Personality Insight:** Videos provide a deeper insight into a candidate's personality, communication style, and enthusiasm - vital traits for roles that demand high interpersonal skills.
2. **Skill Demonstration:** Tour guides can display their knowledge, storytelling abilities, and approach to managing groups, giving recruiters a clearer picture of their potential fit.
3. **Efficiency:** Videos allow for quicker initial evaluations. Recruiters can assess multiple candidates in a shorter time frame, ensuring the process is both rigorous and efficient.

In conclusion, for micro-companies like Amitylux operating internationally, embracing technology and innovative recruitment methods is more than just keeping up. It is about thriving, ensuring that despite their size, they can attract and retain talent that aligns with their brand's lofty standards.

Tackling Recruitment, the Amitylux Way:

- **Effective Job Descriptions:** Every seasonal or permanent role begins with a well-crafted job description. It ensures that only the genuinely interested and aptly qualified candidates apply.
- **Leveraging Modern Recruitment Tools:** Partnering with platforms like thehub.io, Amitylux streamlines its recruitment process. From promoting job openings to quick screenings via video presentations, the initial stages are both efficient and effective. Automation ensures timely responses to all applicants, keeping the brand's image respectful and considerate.
- **Innovative First Screening:** Moving away from traditional first screenings, Amitylux uses a mix of video submissions and impromptu calls. This evaluates the candidate's skills and assesses adaptability and on-the-spot problem-solving - critical traits for roles like tour guides.
- **Task-based Evaluation:** Candidates are given a job-related task before an in-person interview. This practical evaluation highlights the candidate's commitment, punctuality, and quality of work - factors often hard to judge in a standard interview.
- **Smooth Onboarding for Retention:** Recognising that the end of recruitment is the beginning of retention, Amitylux invests in a standardised yet personal onboarding process. Automation ensures that all necessary training and materials are provided, setting the employee up for success from day one.

16.3 Conclusion

Amitylux Tours is a paragon of Nordic travel innovation, striving to offer more than just sightseeing—it provides soulful experiences. At the heart of this brand's promise lies its people and, by extension, its meticulous recruitment strategy.

In a world dominated by larger corporations, the challenges faced by a micro-company like Amitylux, especially in international recruitment, are multifaceted. However, Amitylux's unique approach is characterised by innovation, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to the brand ethos. By harnessing modern technology and automation tools, the company ensures a streamlined process that addresses cultural nuances, budget constraints, and the need for standardised evaluations.

Their innovative introduction of video submissions for tour guide candidates encapsulates the brand's forward-thinking approach, prioritising personality insight, skill demonstration, and recruitment efficiency. This, coupled with well-defined job descriptions, the use of contemporary platforms, task-based evaluations, and a focused onboarding process, paints a picture of a brand that is as deeply committed to its recruitment as it is to its customer experiences.

Amitylux's recruitment journey, in essence, mirrors its service ethos—it is not just about hiring; it is about finding the right fit who can truly immerse travellers in the Nordic soul. As the company continues to set industry standards, its recruitment processes will remain pivotal, ensuring every traveller's journey with Amitylux is sculpted by experts chosen for their skills and passion, adaptability, and alignment with the brand's esteemed vision.

Source: Amitylux Presentation (slides), website. <https://amitylux.com/>

17 Case Study: External Communication (Denmark)

17.1 Introducing the Company

The Coffee Collective is a Copenhagen-based micro roastery with eight coffee shops, wholesale partnerships and an international webshop with online sales to private customers in over 40 countries.

A robust set of values powers their overall purpose: To create exciting coffee experiences that bring better returns to the farmer. Through long-term relationships with farmers, they work to create financial sustainability with transparency in pricing at the core. Dealing directly with farmers with annual visits, paying higher prices, and publishing those prices directly on the bags have been vital to creating transparency in a non-transparent market. At the other end of the chain, their baristas are part of a union agreement (3F), and wind energy powers their coffee shops, reducing the CO2 footprint by up to 40%.

Their yearly Sustainability Report was the first step towards B Corp Certification, and the next step is to continuously improve their impact on the world in general and coffee in particular. The company was B Corp certified in 2019, which means it meets the highest social and environmental impact standards.

Overall, the Coffee Collective pursues to be sustainable in a broad sense. It derives from their belief that it is crucial to show respect to farmers, their employees, and their customers, as well as the environment and society in general, to conduct business responsibly.

Having one collective and clear goal helps The Coffee Collective to build strong external communication through various channels: branding and visual design, website, social media, media relations, customer service, community engagement and partnerships. Solid and powerful company messages and values that are equally shared by management and employees contribute to EVP and attract talents from various cultures and backgrounds.

17.2 What has the company achieved by using a particular model or technique?

The Coffee Collective has successfully built trust with its employees and customers by creating clear values, transparency in all facets of the company, education, employee benefits, and enabling social interactions.

The company managed to get B Corp certification, which is rare in the coffee industry and implies high standards in coffee sourcing policy and in evaluating the company's contributions to its employees' financial security, health & safety, wellness, career development, and engagement & satisfaction. In addition, this section recognises business models designed to benefit workers and those that have workforce development programs to support individuals with barriers to employment.

Being certified as a B Corp, The Coffee Collective has an Impact Business Model, intentionally designed to create a specific positive outcome for one of its stakeholders - workers, community, environment, or customers. It also means the high ability of a company to protect its mission and

formally consider stakeholders in decision-making through its corporate structure or corporate governing documents.

The company is well-presented on social media, having 126,000 followers on Instagram and more than 1,000 followers on LinkedIn and is successfully delivering its message through these channels. The website's monthly visit growth in Denmark is 278%.

17.3 How was it done?

The value of the company is the following:

“The dream that drives The Coffee Collective is to explore and unfold exceptional coffee experiences in a manner that gives better living conditions to coffee farmers across the globe.”

Everyone in the company knows and feels this proclamation. To work for The Coffee Collective is to know the names of the farmers, to know exactly how much they are paid, to recognise a problem with how coffee is traded elsewhere, and to know why it should be changed. This message is strongly supported by the new visual design of the brand, which was updated in 2020. The brand identity was revitalised, and sales had raised among their most sought-after coffee beans while putting an even bigger focus on the coffee farmer (you can find the exact price The Coffee Collective is paying to the farmer/producer on the packaging). Their famous triangles brought The new visual identity to life by creating a dynamic algorithm. Since then, they have produced even more sustainable coffee bags in mono-material plastic.

The quality of their coffee goes up every year because they visit the farms/mills, pay at the very least 25% over fair trade price, build relationships with the same farms year in and year out, and provide stability in a volatile market for their partners at the coffee origin place. This is also shown via social media: videos and engaging interviews directly from farms and with farm owners contribute to the company's value. Teaching employees about the company's core values creates respect/trust among everyone. As a result, it is easy for the company to attract enthusiastic professionals who stay in the company long-term. The team is growing steadily, and the quantity of the coffee shops is increasing.

Another way to build trust is through education programs for employees filled with workshops throughout the year that focus on various topics. If employees are driven to compete in coffee competitions, the company provides facilities, equipment, and knowledge to share. This contributes to the fact that some baristas are becoming Champions at such competitions, building an even stronger brand.

The company is arranging meetings, talks, and specific Origin nights to share knowledge and experiences about the coffee origin farms. All of this sharing lets the baristas draw closer to the experience of their colleagues, which opens up the opportunity to relay some of that information to customers. As owners of The Coffee Collective invite the farmers from Kenya or Bolivia to their HQ in Copenhagen, the opportunity to learn about the coffee baristas work with from the very people who grow, harvest, and process it creates a sense of unity among the team and trust + curiosity from the customers. Once a year, the company holds a management workshop on creating a better environment for employees to give good service.

Human resources director Mikaela Gervard is practising self-growth discussions, where everyone

from the team can arrange a meeting with managers of the HR director. Everyone in the company has these discussions for 6 months and then once a year after that. This is a way to create social capital among all players, contributing to the company's success.

As employees share, they want the company to succeed because they feel the mutual benefit that will be blanketed on their fellow baristas, managers, roasters, administration workers, owners, and especially the farmers they work so closely with. Employees feel taken care of by being a part of one of the best service industry unions and having private insurance, which includes free physical therapy, massages, chiropractic visits, and psychiatry.

The overall feedback from the employees, whether an experienced barista or an intern, is the feeling of trust amongst the colleagues because they feel valued in our work and have one collective and clear goal.

Opportunities that the employees have:

- Get to work with some of the best-tasting and transparently sourced coffees in the world
- A chance to build a long-term career in coffee
- Good union-regulated working conditions, pension, six weeks of vacation per year
- Work for a B-Corp-certified company
- Continuous chance to participate in our Barista Development Programme, talks and other social activities
- A chance to get trained for coffee competitions if you are driven to do so (we have facilities, equipment, and knowledge to share)

Image on the market for potential employees:

We are a workplace that cares about our staff and the work environment. We aim to be a transparent and honest employer that fosters passion and dedication to one's craft – whichever department or role you join.

By joining us, you immerse yourself with a team of committed colleagues who care about their craft and expertise to a high degree (the team is composed of 14 nationalities). Our overall group of staff consists of approx. 130 employees of various backgrounds, nationalities, and skills and what unites us is our strive for a great work environment, quality products and operating sustainably.

17.4 Conclusion

The Coffee Collective has built a solid brand on the market by formulating powerful and sincere messages and values delivered to the potential audience, potential and current employees, and customers via Social media, website, media releases, customer service and community engagement channels. The fact that the owners of the company treat each member of their team, starting from farmers and up to baristas at the coffee shops and customers, as a valuable and biggest asset in customer relations, invests back in the employees and creates new challenges and opportunities to grow – creates an additional value for the company in long term perspective and allows each member of the chain grow sustainably and steadily.

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