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International Recruitment Processes and Candidate Relocation during COVID-19

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<p>The purpose of this thesis is to define how recruitment- and candidate relocation processes are formed, and how has Covid-19 affected them. The paper starts from the beginning of the recruitment process where the need of expertise is identified, and follows the process to the point where candidate has been onboarded to the new position. A semi-structured research is supporting the literature based research, and Herzberg's two factor theory explains motivators behind job satisfaction, and why someone would like to change jobs. Candidate experience and trends of recruitment during the pandemic are also discussed.</p>	
Keywords	recruitment, international recruitment, candidate relocation, COVID-19

Contents

Glossary

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Thesis topic	1
2	Literature review and research methods	4
2.1	Research methods	4
2.2	Literature review	4
3	International recruitment processes	6
3.1	Realising the need for international expertise	7
3.2	Sourcing and contacting candidates	8
3.2.1	Company image in recruitment	9
3.3	Interviews	11
3.4	Offer	13
3.5	Signing contracts	13
4	Candidate relocation	15
4.1	Digital nomads and remote working	16
4.2	Reasoning behind decision making	16
4.2.1	Family	18
4.2.2	Quality of life	19
4.2.3	Cultural factors	19
4.2.4	Career development	21
4.3	Relocation packages	22
5	Theoretical framework	23
5.1	Herzberg's two factor theory in recruitment	24
6	Qualitative research	26
6.1	Interviewee	26
6.2	Overview of three different relocation cases	26
6.3	Results and analysis	27

6.4	Main findings	28
7	Recruitment trends 2020-2021	30
8	Conclusion	32
	References	33

Table of Figures and Tables

Figure 1.	The generalised outlining of a recruitment process	6
Figure 2.	Relocation in three stages	15
Figure 3.	Example of cross-cultural training methods in teaching German culture	21
Figure 4.	Example of Two Factor Theory of Motivation	23
Figure 5.	Example of hygiene factors in a job advertisement	24

Appendices

Appendix 1.	Interview questions	
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Glossary

HR Human Resources. The department/team/person in a company that takes care of topics regarding employees and their wellbeing.

COVID-19 Can also be written as Covid-19. Later referred also as “the pandemic”. This research is conducted in the beginning of 2021, and at this moment the pandemic has affected the society for approximately one year. “Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It was initially reported to the WHO on December 31, 2019. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency. On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, its first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009” (Cennimo 2021).

1 Introduction

This report is built in seven parts. The first part introduces and evaluates the literature around human resources, recruitment and relocating. The second- and third part discusses recruitment processes, candidate relocation processes and the reasoning behind it, how they are affected by COVID-19, and how does the situation now differ from how it has previously been. The fourth part discusses Herzberg's two factor theory in recruitment processes, and the fifth part presents and analyses data collected by quantitative research methods. The sixth part will present the trends in recruitment in 2020-2021, based on working the field of recruitment during the pandemic. The final part consists of a conclusion and analysis of the outcome of the research.

This thesis is problem-solving based, in the sense that the end goal is to gain deeper knowledge on how and the research is focused on how international recruitment processes are conducted, how the relocation process progresses, and what are the key factors that makes the candidate decide whether to relocate or not. From all the previous, there will be comparison of what it was like before Covid-19, and what the situation currently is. This research is relevant, because the field of international recruitment has been affected by the global pandemic and forced to adapt to the new normal. The process of international recruitment is a lot more than just accepting an offer and moving somewhere new; this research also aims to understand the psychological factors behind the relocation decisions. By this way, one could understand the aspects that motivate candidates to possibly change the lives of an entire family.

1.1 Thesis topic

International recruitment processes and candidate relocation are very common in the modern world, since moving from place to place has become rather effortless with all the relocation- and transportation services available. Due to the curiosity of the human nature, people usually enjoy discovering new places and meeting new people, and this drives people to choose job opportunities abroad, amongst other reasons. International recruitment is important, because it gives companies benefits such as access to wider

talent pools and help from local employees when expanding the company (Velocity Global 2018).

For individuals, working abroad can bring better career opportunities, the ability to develop your skills and to see the world from a different perspective (Hannan NDA). Covid-19 has affected the ways of working and recruiting, but because of the skill shortage and lack of professionals, international recruitment needs to adapt to it rather than just stopping (le Doux NDA).

When compared to even 20 years ago, it has become a lot more common to choose to work abroad, and for companies to seek international applicants. An important fact also is that in the early 00's, recruiters worked mostly locally, not even on a country level (L. Kangas 2020) whereas recruiters nowadays work almost invariably globally, and have pipelines of talent located worldwide. This is also because the generation that are now in the workforce or entering it, are millennials or generation Z. Millennials are born between 1981 and 1996, and gen Z between 1997 and 2012 (Kasasa 2021). The younger generation sees working life in a rather different way than baby boomers. The older generation's attitude towards work is that they lived to work, and the younger generation work to live (Sullivan et al. 2009: 3). Millennials and Gen Z are not that co-dependent towards a company but rather follow their own path and are not hesitant to move to the next employer, if they feel that it would serve their individual goals and values better. Naturally, this is one of the reasons that relocating after jobs has become more common and is seen more effortless.

The purpose for this research is to fully understand the steps and reasoning of an international recruitment process, from the moment the need for expertise is recognized, to the point where the chosen candidate is moving to the country or city the job is located, and is onboarded into the company.

The psychological part of human resource management will be touched when covering the reasoning behind an individual's decisions to relocate abroad, and what things do they value the most. The candidate side of the process will also be discussed when going through elements, both negative and positive, that form the candidate experience.

Covid-19 has had a major impact in many industries, and this time in the history is also sort of a test for companies; how quickly are they able to adapt their strategies to the changing situation? A lot of companies are forced to decrease the number of employees and lay-offs have been common in many industries (Inomics 2020). The field of recruitment, and the way it has been done has changed - probably for good. This research will provide examples and ways both recruitment processes and relocating candidates has been affected by the pandemic. All the above will be covered from the agency side, as if the situation were that a company has hired an agency to recruit them an expert and the recruitment process will be carried on by the agency. The in-house point of view, where usually the HR-department in co-operation with hiring managers are the ones taking care of the process, will be also covered. This research is relevant especially because it can be used in the future to gain knowledge in how the situation was during the pandemic.

The research conducted in this paper answers the research question for this thesis, which is as follows: **How are international recruitment- and relocation processes formed and how has COVID-19 affected them?**

2 Literature review and research methods

2.1 Research methods

The main method of research in this paper is literature in different forms. This is because there has been published a great number relevant material regarding recruitment processes and candidate relocation. The secondary method of research used is qualitative research data collected by a semi-structural interview. The semi-structural interview was chosen as a method, because it could prove that the research done is accurate. The interviewee could provide relevant data about relocation in three different occasions, in different circumstances. Working in the field of recruitment during Covid-19 has also brought relevant, up to date knowledge in how the processes work, and what methodology is used in different parts of it. That is why some parts of the upcoming writing do not have referring to literature, and is based on the knowledge gained through work experience.

2.2 Literature review

The most important literature piece used in this paper is *The Routledge Companion to International Human Resource Management*, edited by David G. Collings, Geoffrey T. Wood and Paula M, published in 2014. It is an excellent source of the key themes and topics in international human resource management, and contains especially good information and provides answers about global mobility and candidate relocation, and the reasoning behind it. This book goes very in to detail with the different motivators, and it made analyzing the outcomes of the qualitative research more simple. It combines studies conducted earlier by multiple authors. All of them have provided valuable insights for this research, and that is why this piece of literature is referred to multiple times.

The Complete Guide to Recruitment: A step-by-step approach to selecting, assessing and hiring the right people, by Jane Newell Brown published in 2011 provides an excellent overview of the recruitment process from the very beginning. Even though the information in the book is very broad, the framework it provides is good and adaptable for international recruitment processes.

As stated earlier, there is a large variety of information provided about international recruitment processes and candidate relocation. Besides the books mentioned earlier, there has not been one exact piece of literature that would have provided all the information needed. The information in the possible sources has been either very narrow, and not in the niche of the research, or very broad information that does not go as much in-depth as needed. That is why multiple sources has been used, such as articles written by independent professionals and researchers. Especially Alison Doyle, a job search expert for The Balance Careers, has produced multiple great articles about different parts of the recruitment process. Thesis work done by other people in this subject area has been especially useful, especially the work done by Katriina Dunn (JAMK 2019), who wrote her thesis about careers and motivations of IT-professionals. The idea to use Herzberg's two factor theory in this research formed through her work. Research and articles conducted from companies themselves, such as "Millennials at work" by PwC, 2020, have also brought valuable insights to this research.

Because Covid-19 is a relatively new situation, there is a gap in the scientific literature published regarding candidate relocation. This can be because the methods and practices in the field have yet to form to a standard which would enable for authors to carry out in-depth research and conduct books for example. Due to personal experience working in a recruitment agency during the pandemic, several insights about the recruitment process, candidate relocation and the candidate experience during this time can be provided. The work experience has been particularly useful since one can provide real-life examples on how international recruitment processes are formed, and how Covid-19 has affected them.

3 International recruitment processes

Based on one's own experience in recruitment and by participating in several recruitment processes as a candidate, the process of recruitment varies on the company and on the position filled. The steps of the process are usually as follows; recognizing the need for talent, if it is a new role then designing the job and requirements, posting and promoting the job, sourcing for candidates and screening applications, interviews, reference check, selection, offer, and finally signing the contract, according Margaret Dale (2003).

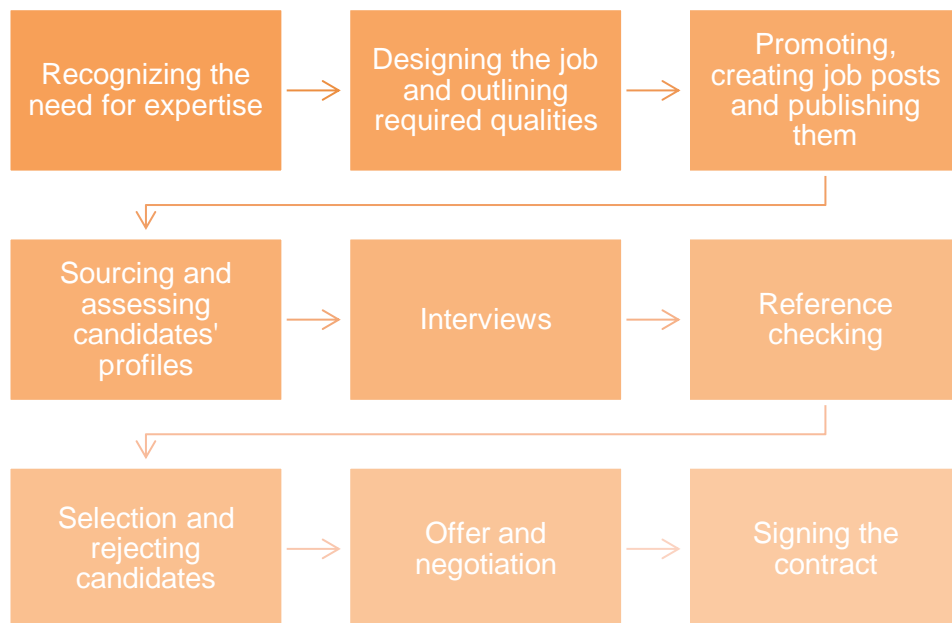


Figure 1, The generalised outlining of a recruitment process

Generally, smaller companies have more simple recruitment processes because hiring managers are usually interviewing and taking part in the project from the beginning, and are eligible of making decisions independently without multiple interviews or different bureaucratic steps. Whereas in large corporations the process takes usually longer because the hiring managers need to wait for confirmations and permissions to act, backgrounds are usually more thoroughly checked and the candidate is usually meeting multiple different people in the forms of interviews (Glassdoor 2018).

Based on experience from the recruitment field, the process also depends on whether a company has outsourced their recruitment (or parts of it) or not. If they have, the recruitment agency usually delivers suitable candidates who have been screened, after the company has given the agency a job specification, and signed contracts. These contracts usually include details for example about the fees and timelines. They might have some extensions in the contracts, such as if the given candidate would resign during the trial period, the agency would agree on finding the company new candidates without an additional fee. See more about screening and other interviews in 4.3.

3.1 Realising the need for international expertise

Jane Newell Brown (2011: 5-6) has defined well the backbone of the need for recruitment: “The need for recruitment is driven by the success or failure of other parts of the organization. If your business is highly successful and needs to grow, recruitment will be a prime driver of growth ... If your business hires the wrong people, loses more people than it hires and is unable to get them to deliver what’s needed, then high volumes of recruitment can be a symptom of a wider problem”.

A company is nothing without its employees, and getting the right people is crucial for its operations to succeed. If you get engaged, high performing employees, it usually leads to growth and the need for recruitment (Brown 2011). This naturally works also the other way around; if a company cannot create an atmosphere where the employees feel appreciated and recognized, the need for recruitment will most likely be continuous because the employees will not stay in an atmosphere like that for long. The recruitment process begins when the need for an employee is distinguished. This can be for example when an old employee has announced that they resign, and their position needs to be filled. On the other hand, for example in the technology field the lack of talent is continuous (Gelber NDA), and the recruitment might be ongoing during all times, even if it is not actively done.

Based on experience in the recruitment field, the organization might realise they need international talent simply by understanding that the talent pool in their area is not large enough for the position they are trying to fill. That is the key turning point in the recruitment process going from local to international. Based on experience, this is the

case with multiple IT recruitment processes, where there simply are not enough interested candidates in your country, and the organization needs to start looking for people in different locations. Realizing the need for international recruitment might also form when the organization is expanding, and they are in need for local expertise (Ruuska 2020). According Scullion and Collings (2006: 76), if a multinational company realizes the need for international assignments and therefore the need for international recruitment, the most efficient way to conduct the recruitment is identifying the expatriate within the company. In this situation, the need for international talent is realized from the beginning of the process.

3.2 Sourcing and contacting candidates

In this section, the example position we are discussing is a mid-senior level role in the IT-field, such as a Backend Developer. The supply and demand do not connect, because as earlier noticed, there is a shortage of IT-professionals. According to Korn Ferry (2018), the financial impact of the gap in talent (about 85 million workers) could reach \$8.452 trillion in unrealized annual revenue by 2030 if it is left unchecked. This by itself is enough to describe the challenges a regular company (not holding similar value in the eyes of a tech-talent like Facebook and Google are) faces when looking for IT-talents.

When the recruitment process is executed, the first step is to start looking for suitable talent. Posting job advertisements on different platforms is perhaps the most common way to do this, but some positions do not attract enough candidates or the candidates gained that way are not suitable enough. The process where one actively searches and reaches out to potential candidates is called sourcing (Calvello 2020). One of the most recognized ways of doing this is through LinkedIn Recruiter, which is a “platform for finding, connecting with, and managing candidates” (LinkedIn). Through LinkedIn Recruiter, one can determine the qualities they require the candidate to have, for example experience, the field they work in, location and educational background. The platform allows you to build different talent pools for different roles, and makes reaching out to candidates rather simple.

Especially in the IT-industry, passive talent, which are people that are currently employed and not actively looking for a new job (Dewar 2013), is something that recruiters face on the daily basis. These candidates can be difficult to attract, because usually they are headhunted by several recruiters, and one needs to stand out to catch the interest of the talent. Looking out for passive candidates can be useful in many ways. They most likely already have the suitable skills the recruiter is looking for since they have been sourced, they are unlikely to exaggerate their skills because they are not in a desperate need for a new job, and there is a higher chance that they are not actively participating in other recruitment processes (hirevelocity NDA).

Based on experience from the recruitment field, the real challenge is to get these highly skilled and –demanded IT-experts to be interested on hearing what you offer, and why do you and your offer stand out. The initial reach out after one has sourced a seemingly suitable candidate should contain a brief introduction about you and the company, reasoning behind reaching out and what value would this offer bring to the candidate (Dewar 2013). Skilled professionals get a lot of reach outs from recruiters, and that is why the first impression is what matters. It can be rather awkward if one has not done their research about the potential candidate properly, and the message they send looks like a bulk message that has been sent for every interesting candidate in their talent pool. By tailoring the message, keeping the information brief and interesting and doing the research properly the candidate is more likely to be interested on hearing more (Pavlou NDA).

3.2.1 Company image in recruitment

The company image has a great impact in what the candidate initially thinks about the recruiter reaching out; candidates can find company X more attractive, because of in the field it operates in, and because the company has branded itself well. Wilden et al. (2010: 56-57) has stated the following about employer branding:

“In employment markets characterized by high competition, obtaining suitable human resources becomes increasingly problematic as the number of applicants per vacancy declines. Firms need to develop strategies to ensure that their human-resource base remains adequate for the challenge of doing business. In increasingly competitive employment markets, developing strategies to become an employer of choice and to increase the number of applicants per

advertised vacancy can facilitate the recruitment of suitable employees and provides a strategic advantage to the firm“

This concludes the importance of good employer branding very well. In an ideal situation, when a company has an open position, either in their own platform or through a recruitment agency, it will attract several high-quality candidates. In this situation, the recruiter has the ability to pick the best candidates, and proceed further to the recruitment process with them. Especially in the IT-field, this rarely is the case for the standard company, for the standard developer position opening. That is why high-quality headhunting, and the recruiter creating an interesting first impression, is crucial.

It is also important to realize the fact that recruiters need to consider new ways to attract the younger generation, because the way they view the working life differs a lot from the older generation. The so called “loyalty” towards one employer for the entire length of one’s career is outdated in a sense. Nowadays it can be viewed as foolish amongst young professionals to stay with one employer for years, if they cannot provide growth opportunities. What was once called as job hopping, has shifted more to forming your own path by building your skills and expertise through different companies and employments, and then finding out what employers can offer them (Human Age 2.0 2016). For individuals that have the expertise and otherwise strong credentials, changing jobs and exploring different work cultures can lead to increased salary and added responsibility (Human Age 2.0 2016).

In addition, this might help them finding “The One” – as in the company that matches their values, and thoroughly offers them what they are looking for – they want to work for good. It is a double-edged sword, because without proper skills and competences changing jobs often can make one seem like they are lacking interest and motivation. (Fabricant et al. 2014: 117) For students and young people, there are a lot of chances to explore different fields through internships and part-time jobs.

PwC conducted a research in 2020 called “Millennials at work”, which brought up a lot of interesting points regarding the work life habits of the younger generations. For Gen Z and millennials, the amount of money that comes to your bank account every month is not the most important factor when deciding between jobs. For example, proper work/life balance, diversity promises, growth opportunities and the speed that it happens are

things that can make a millennial choose Company X over Company Y (PwC 2020). Companies need to be aware of their image and keep up with the changing world, because even though large, old corporations are traditionally considered secure places to work at, security may not be enough to keep an employee anymore (PwC 2020).

Advertising jobs during the pandemic has also become even important than ever. People are hesitant to relocate abroad, so a lot of the candidates are looking for positions that could be done remotely, at least in the beginning. This is based on experience in working in the recruitment field, and being in contact with candidates regarding positions overseas. Therefore, the job advertisement should include information about remote work possibilities, flexible hours and a structure of what the steps in the recruitment process are going to be like (Inomics 2020). This includes things such in what time frame the interviews are going to be, how they are arranged, and when the candidate is expected to start working (Inomics 2020). If a candidate gets all the relevant information from the job advertisement, they will be more likely to apply to a position. This is also a way for the organization to improve their company image, because the candidate feels appreciated since they do not have to for example call the recruiter to ask for more information.

3.3 Interviews

A screening call or a screening interview is a brief discussion between the recruiter and the candidate in which motivations of both parties, the experience and skills, availability and salary expectation of the candidate is reviewed (Recruiting Social 2016). Once these are clear and the candidate seems to be suitable for the job, they can be sent to the more senior staff to be assessed more in-depth. If the recruitment process is not partly outsourced, there might be junior recruitment staff in the company that does the screening. During the pandemic, these screening calls/-interviews are mostly conducted by phone or as a virtual interview, whereas before the pandemic these could also be done in person.

All the above depends on the role. For example, for an entry-level role in a high interest industry such as HR there will be large number of applicants, and they are usually screened by more junior staff. Whereas recruiting for a senior executive position the candidates are usually headhunted, and deal with more senior HR-/recruitment-staff from the beginning of the process.

After the screening call, there is usually an invite to a second interview if everything seems well. According Dale (2003), there are four types of interviews. Structured interviews are ones where every question is planned and has a purpose. Competency-based interviews focus on the specific competences of the candidate, and they need to provide an example of a situation where this competency or skill has been used (Bosworth 2019). Situational interviews are based on imaginary scenarios, and are formed of "What if" questions. Informal interviews are not that structured, but rather conversation-like. Based on recruitment experience, informal interviews are usually held when a candidate has been sourced and both parties are learning more about each other and the suitability for the position.

The number of interviews or different tasks depends on the organization and the role. Doing a background check is usually a part of the process at some point. This might include checking references, criminal records and financial records, all depending on the position and the company (Doyle 2020). The last round is usually a final interview. In this stage, there is usually a small pool of talent left and the candidate will be meeting senior executives or possibly the CEO (Doyle 2019) and this determines the future of the possible job offer.

During Covid-19, interviews are usually conducted remotely, via different software tools, such as Zoom and Skype (Rogers 2020). Preparing for job interviews can be even more stressful than before, because the candidates are dependent on technology and a stable internet connection is essential. Virtual interviews may become the new normal, since organizations realise that it is not necessary to fly candidates out to interviews, and it might overall be more efficient to just start and end a call, rather than having someone come over to the office. This naturally is a variable, which once again depends on the role and on the company.

3.4 Offer

Once the organization makes the decision about the best candidate, they will propose an offer to them. Based on experience, this is usually initiated by calling the candidate and followed up by written evidence, usually an email, of what the offer includes; title, salary, benefits and other important factors. (Haden NDA) Based on experience from the field, it is not that uncommon that a candidate refuses the first offer, and that there will be some negotiation done. If the candidate is someone the organization does not want to let slip out of their hands, and if the organization and the position is something the candidate has been dreaming of, there most likely will be an outcome that will satisfy both parties. The offer stage should result in a win/win situation, where both parties feel like they will benefit from the outcome in a way (Dale 2003).

Especially when relocation is occurring, it is important for the candidate to only accept an offer they are fully happy with. Moving to a new country, and having to stress about financial aspects because the job is not paying enough, can be very draining. In the worst case, the candidate will resign rather quickly. During Covid-19, the financial situation may have changed for the worse for many people (Martin et al. 2020). It may lead to accepting job offers even though they are not optimal, since the need for stable income is usually necessary (Luckwaldt 2020).

If there is no agreement on the job offer, the candidate will decline it. If this happens, the position is usually offered to the second-best candidate. If they are not satisfactory enough, the process starts over (Dale 2003).

3.5 Signing contracts

When both parties have a mutual understanding and agreement on a job offer, the next step is usually signing an employment contract. Signing a contract is essential, because it will protect especially the employee, when there is black on white about legal topics for example. For employers, the contract can give the possibility for a non-compete clause, which protects the employer by the candidate not being able to work for their competitor and possibly sharing valuable inside information (tek.fi 2018).

Signing the contract is commonly done rather immediately after agreeing on the offer, since accepting an offer does not bind a candidate in anything. Before the pandemic, contracts could be signed face-to-face, but now it is common to sign them electronically, based on own experience. Electronic signature can be done by for example Adobe Sign, Visma and DocuSign. (SSL.com 2020)

4 Candidate relocation

Shaffer et al. (2012) has categorized global workers in two different categories. These two are expatriates, corporate expatriates and self-initiated expatriates, so people that have been assigned to work in another country inside an organization, or who are relocating to another country after a new organization. The second category is global travelers, which are international business travelers, short-term assignees, and flexpatriates (Collings et al. 2014: 243). In this section, the relocation process of expatriates, especially them whom are relocating after a new organization, and reasoning behind the decision making, will be covered.

Global mobility can be divided in to three stages, according Collings et al. They are as follows; **the exploration stage**, which is a period where global work opportunities are explored, and evaluation regarding personal- and business resources are done. During this time, the candidate will consider if they are ready to relocate and weigh the importance of different aspects (see latter parts of this section). **The establishment stage** is when the relocation physically happens, and the candidate and their possible family adapt to the new environment and culture. During the **embeddedness stage**, the candidate has embedded in the new environment and living in the new country or location has become a new normal (2014: 245).

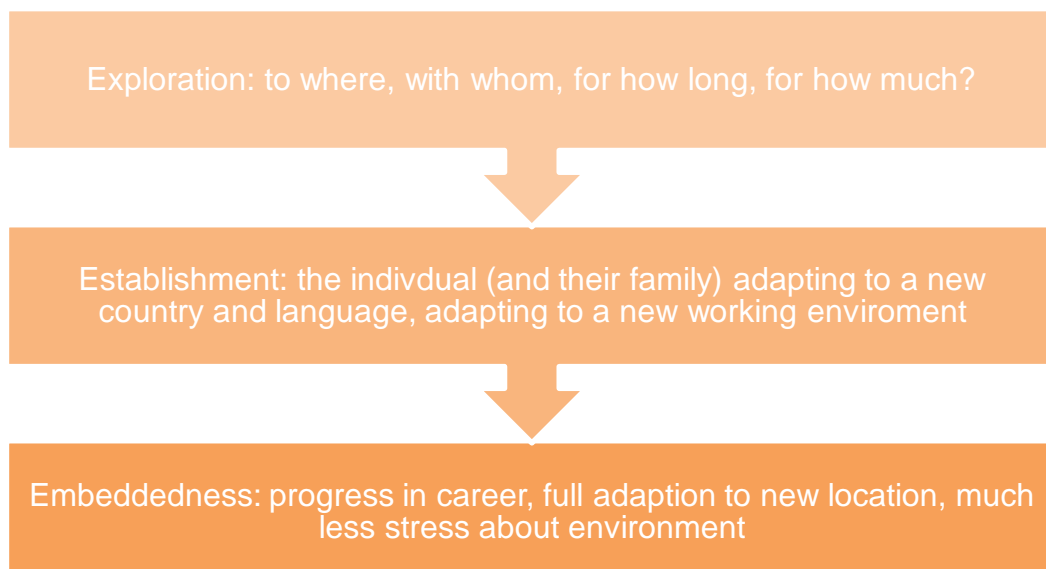


Figure 2, Relocation in three stages (Collings et al. 2014: 245).

4.1 Digital nomads and remote working

It is important, and rather interesting, to acknowledge that especially in the technical field (also digital marketing, content creating and similar fields where work can be done fully remotely by an individual) there is a rising trend of so called digital nomads. “Digital nomads work remotely, telecommuting rather than being physically present at a company's headquarters or office. The digital nomad lifestyle has been made possible through a number of innovations, including content management software, cheap Internet access through WiFi, smartphones, and Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) to keep in contact with clients and employers” (Hayes 2020). However, this is noticeably different than candidates relocating after a job offer. Digital nomads are people that have already been employed or are self-employed, and get to pick the location they are working from.

After COVID-19, there quite certainly can be expected an increase of people working fully remotely from a different location than the company office is. During this odd situation midst pandemic, the adaptability of companies and employees regarding remote- or hybrid work practices has most certainly been put in to test, and they have forced to create new practices. Working fully remotely will most likely be a possibility, even a new normal for some companies. (Loosvelt 2021)

4.2 Reasoning behind decision making

As mentioned earlier, during the exploration stage, reasoning behind the relocation decision is being weighed. According to Collings et al. (2014: 345-348) these can be outlined in three different categories. The first category is personal characteristics, which include personal motivations and interests, and personal agency. What would this bring to me as an individual, what is the country like, how will this help my career development? These are the selfish, and maybe most important reasons. Personal agency is also an important factor in this section. “[personal] Agency is a philosophical term that refers to one’s ability to act in a given situation. When discussing the nature of free will and responsibility, it is important to be mindful of how much agency a person has” (philosophicaltherapist.com).

People generally enjoy having the freedom of decision making, which also includes where and to whom they want to work for, and therefore the previously mentioned digital nomadism and remote working in general are getting more popular. On the other hand, if an individual is working in an organization and given an assignment that requires traveling or moving abroad, their ability to refuse without conflict is short (Richardson & Mallon 2005). This an example where one does not have personal agency.

Candidates relocating to a new organization, and assignments abroad within an organization are decisions which need to be done with careful consideration. If a candidate decides to accept a job offer or an assignment from their company without being certain about it, and due to family reasons (the family is not able to adapt) or personal reasons (not being able to adjust themselves, job expectations not met, the organization realizes the candidate is not suitable after all) it can lead to failure. If they need to leave the country or organization, the costs can be very large. The cost created from this can be separated to direct costs, which include monetary investments done to get and maintain the employee in the host country, and indirect costs, which include for example loss of market share, and severed relationships with clients, local business partners or government officials in host location (Andreason 2003: 548).

One needs to be aware that the reasons a mission like this fails are not always because of issues with the candidate or their family. The organization needs to also consider certain factors carefully, and not just select a random candidate from overseas to relocate to them, or to choose just any employee to relocate after an assignment. The aspects to cover pre-departure are for example the candidate's mobility, career development within the organization, technical competencies (does the candidate hold the ability to handle responsibilities in the new position) and cross-cultural competencies (is the candidate and their family fit to adapt to a new environment and is their situation ideal for it) (O'Farrell 2012). By considering these factors the organization can assure that the global mobility has the best starting point possible. It would be morally corrupt of an organization to send or to hire a candidate to circumstances that are detrimental from the beginning, for example if the organization is in severe financial difficulties and not able to hold on to the employee, or if the assignment they are sent to do is beyond impossible (O'Farrell 2012). This can also down to a very simple reason; the organization just utterly failed in the recruitment process and hired the wrong candidate.

4.2.1 Family

The second category is relational support. This can be from family and/or from the organization. Whether the family is coming with or not, it is extremely important that the family members and close people wholeheartedly support the decisions made by the candidate, and act as their backup instrumentally (taking care of the children and/or the household) and emotionally (empathize and listen) (Collings et al., 2014: 351). If the candidate is relocating on their own and their family is left behind, it takes time to form close bonds in the new location and support from the family is crucial.

During Covid-19, the financial situation of many households has been changed dramatically with unemployment and lay-offs. (Martin et al. 2020) Even in a multi-job household, the situation may be uncertain, and this may affect the likelihood of a candidate accepting a job abroad in different ways. If a steady, well-paid job is offered abroad, the candidate may be more likely to accept the offer either by relocating by themselves or with their family, especially if their spouse is not in a stable job and financial stability is desired. On the other hand, people might be hesitant in taking risks and accepting an exciting, but possibly risky job offer and stepping to the unknown, especially if they risk the income and stability of also others than themselves (Larson 2020).

When one has a family – it can anything an individual considers family; a spouse, kids, a pet – situations naturally tend to be a bit more complex rather than the candidate making decisions only for themselves. For example, when the candidate has a spouse and two children, the change affects the life of four people. The spouse may have an even harder time with adapting to the new situation than the candidate has, because the candidate has the full support and safety of an organization behind them. Especially if the spouse would decide not to work in the new location, they need to adapt to a new culture without the help of their close support network and the structure of work. (Adler 2008: 314).

The difference in the levels of seniority in the role the candidate is filling also has an affect here. If the role is very junior, the organization may not offer very recognizable partner support. On the other hand, if the seniority level of the role is very high and the

organization truly wants that exact candidate in the team, they are more likely to provide tailored assistance for the spouse.

This can for example be them helping find a position for the partner, if they decide that they want to work in the new location. Other services provided can be for example cultural counselling, training and development, and networking services (relototalent.com 2019). This can be part of the relocation package if it is done through a service provider, see 4.3.

4.2.2 Quality of life

Quality of life in the destination location can considerably affect in the decision making when choosing whether to stay or go. Whether the quality of life is good or bad, is an extremely subjective definition (Crawford NDA). The quality of life in a certain place can be measured by for example the ranking of schools, the price level of housing in good neighbourhoods, low crime rates, good public transportation, and a nice selection of lifestyle activities such as shopping, exercise possibilities, entertainment and nature (Crawford NDA). Someone with a family would most likely choose not to relocate from a safe suburb with excellent schools to a busy part of downtown with high crime rates and below average schools. On the other hand, for a single person especially with remarkable career development coming with the relocation, an environment with an active social scene and great restaurants and bars could be ideal. One can assume that this type of an expat would not mind the lack of great schools and that the area could be a bit more restless than the suburbia.

4.2.3 Cultural factors

According Colligns et al., the third major category in global mobility during the exploration stage, after personal characteristics and relational support, is contextual influences. Different contextual factors regarding relocation can be for example organizational (the strategy and motivation behind relocating a candidate or hiring abroad) or environmental, such as cultural factors (2014: 349). The following paragraph binds together well what are the different cultural- and geographical factors that affect the candidate's decision:

“... [candidates] consider the location, including cultural similarity and dissimilarity, and security (Aryee et al., 1996; Dickmann et al., 2008; Hippler, 2009), as well as city-specific factors such as an attractive standard of living (Carr et al., 2005), the reputation of the global location (Dickmann & Mills, 2010; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2008), the prestige of working in a particular city (Doherty et al., 2011), and the attitudes and behaviours of the host country citizens (Dickmann & Mills, 2010)”

The above is cited by Collings et al. 2014, page 350. A destination that answers well for the criteria set above, can make the decision about relocating slightly easier, because the circumstances are set for success (Bartz & Fuchs-Schündeln 2012: 1148–1163). If a candidate is relocated to a destination which does not provide different cultural qualities desired, the mission might be set to failure from the start. It still needs to be taken into consideration that different people naturally value different cultural factors (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall 1992), for example for someone relocating by themselves, the education system does not matter as much as for someone locating with children that are in the school age.

If someone has previous international experiences, such as working abroad earlier or someone who has travelled remarkably, adapting to different cultures may be easier. (Selmer 2001: 1219–1233). Employees and spouses who are relocating to a country with totally different culture, for example from Finland which has a rather linear-active culture (polite but direct, logical, limited body language) to a country such as Mexico which has extremely multi-active culture (emotional, displays feelings, unlimited body language) (Beyond Cultural Differences NDA) could benefit from cross-cultural training. Carolyn Willer (2021) describes cross-cultural training as follows:

“The purpose of the training aims to broaden awareness between people where a common cultural structure does not exist, in order to encourage clear lines of communication and better relationships ... Intercultural training programs are intended to expand cultural awareness and make the transition process faster, by providing employees and their families with the knowledge, awareness, skills, and tools essential to successfully interact across other cultures.”

Figure 3 below shows an example of what cross-cultural training can be like, and what methods can be used for it. This specific model was used on students, but similar practices are assumed to work with employees.

	Training aims and contents	Methods	
		Experiential	Didactic
K N O W L E D G E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepening of cultural general knowledge and cultural awareness • Transmitting of culture specific knowledge on German culture in the form of German cultural standards • Information on cultural differences between Czech, Polish, Ukrainian and German culture • Fostering of self awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulation • Role plays with additional debriefing and background information • Pantomime-Game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Film • Lecture • Case studies and critical incidents, especially making isomorphic attributions in case studies • Discussions
M A T U R I T Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement of empathy, tolerance for ambiguity and ethnorelativism Dealing with negative emotions coupled with cross-cultural misunderstandings and failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in role plays and analysis of own feelings and needs • Interaction with other participants in role plays and simulation • Experience of strange new situations and cross-cultural problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagination in the positions of the protagonists of critical incident • Analysis of emotions the protagonists
S K I L L S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice of culture adequate behaviors • Solving of cross-cultural problems • Training of metacommunication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing new scenarios for conflict-laden role plays and their performance • Solving the task in the simulation game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing new scenarios for critical incidents • Identifying of successful acculturation strategies in the film and broadening of one's behavior repertoire

Figure 3, example of cross-cultural training methods in teaching German culture (Kováčová et al., 2010)

Investing on cultural training, and over all adapting well to the new culture and environment is an essential factor and the success of relocation can depend on it. It can be assumed that during Covid-19, connecting with like-minded people in a new environment and therefore adapting well can be extremely difficult (James 2020). The help and support of the organization is extremely important during this time.

4.2.4 Career development

Career development is maybe the most important reason that drives people to relocate (Marshall NDA). Career development can be measured in different ways, such as an increase in the salary or seniority, or a position in a company that is more interesting and provides growth opportunities and challenges. The concept of career development as a motivator can be divided to intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Intrinsic motivators are for example personal challenges and career development, and other aspects that are more psychological. (Crowley-Henry, 2007; Hippler, 2009; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Selmer & Leung, 2003; Stahl, Miller, and Tung, 2002 cited in Collings et al. 2014). The extrinsic motivators in career development are usually monetary, such as financial rewards, compensation packages and different benefits (for example getting a company car, housing, healthcare and/or children's education) (Boies & Rothstein, 2002; Chew & Zhu, 2002; Richardson & McKenna, 2002; Warneke & Schneider, 2011 cited in Collings et al. 2014).

4.3 Relocation packages

How the relocation process proceeds in the actual moving part, depends on the situation. Usually the company offers some sort of a relocation package, which can considerably help the employee in the relocation process, and help the organization to retain them (Baumann NDA). The relocation packages can be formed by the organization themselves. Another option is to use a service provider for this, such as Move My Talent operating in Estonia. These service providers can provide all-inclusive packages, including immigration (visa, residence permit), destination services (banking, finding a doctor), home search, school & kindergarten search, and the previously discussed cross-cultural training and networking (movemytalent.com).

If the company provides their own relocation package, it usually consists of moving costs, travel costs to the final destination (tickets, gas, train), and short term housing. Companies can also provide the previously discussed cross-cultural training and spousal support (Baumann, NDA). The HR-department in an organization usually takes care of these aspects and is the main point of support for the candidate and their family.

Especially during this pandemic, assisting candidates in relocating is very crucial. Many services are not open, and looking for housing can be difficult due to travel restrictions in some countries and areas. They can prevent on from going to look for housing pre-move. A relocation package can be considered successful when it has met the needs of the employee and the organization, both cost-effectively but in a way that the employee feels that all their needs have been properly taken care of (Collins NDA).

5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this paper focuses on the motivation factors regarding the recruitment process and candidate relocation, that have been discussed in previous sections. Frederick Herzberg developed his Two Factor Theory (also known as Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory and the Dual Structure Theory) in 1959 (expertprogrammanagement.com). The purpose of the Two Factor theory is to get in-depth knowledge and understanding about where the motivation comes from in the workplace, and how one motivates their team (Mind Tools).

There are two factors in Herzberg's theory. The first one is motivators; aspects which encourage employees to work harder, found in the job itself, factors for satisfaction. The other one is hygiene factors, which are causes and factors of dissatisfaction. It is crucial to note that the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction, and the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction. Increase in satisfaction will not decrease dissatisfaction, for example increase in advancement (factor for satisfaction) will not decrease the dissatisfaction in the small salary (Mind Tools). Figure 4 below showcases an example of motivators and hygiene factors.



www.expertprogrammanagement.com

Figure 4, Example of Two Factor Theory of Motivation (expertprogrammanagement.com)

The absence of hygiene factors cause great dissatisfaction, but they will not bring any additional motivation. They could be thought as a necessary part of a job, for example one could not work without a computer, but having a computer will not bring them any excess motivation. Motivators on the other hand bring people motivation, but they do not decrease one's job satisfaction if missing. If the motivation is low but the hygiene is high, work may be seen strictly as a way to earn money and live. If the hygiene is low but the motivation is high (could be an exciting start-up scenario for example), employees are very motivated, but the work conditions and salary are dissatisfactory which cause the employees to complain a lot (Human Business 2017). In the tech-field where there is a lack of professionals and many exciting opportunities available for them, people generally lean towards jobs with high motivation factors. In this paper, the model is going to be adjusted to sparking the interest of a candidate in a recruitment process and how they can be attracted to relocating.

5.1 Herzberg's two factor theory in recruitment

The hygiene factors are the basic things you need to keep the employee satisfied – one could describe them as maintenance factors. If these are lacking, the employee will be dissatisfied. The hygiene factors are perhaps the most critical when applying for a job, and organizations use these when trying to attract candidates. These are aspects that are usually easier describe than motivators, and therefore used in creating job advertisements, based on own experience.

- A dynamic new-space environment with a start-up vibe and a scale-up approach
- Space for self-development, research time, training, conferences or certification schemes
- An independent role with a supportive and diverse work environment
- An extremely motivated team of top-tier engineers and commercial operations to work with
- Inspiring and collaborating, pet-friendly office lounge and silent working space enabling focus
- Nicely equipped gym area
- Occupational healthcare, occupational and private insurance
- Relocation support (flight tickets, accommodation, relocation buddy program)
- Compensation for language courses, conferences etc.
- Internal events for employees on a regular basis (e.g. sports events, team-building events, parties etc.)
- A wide variety of best coffee, tea, snacks and sweets to accompany your daily space mission

Figure 5, Example of hygiene factors in a job advertisement (Glassdoor.com 2021)

Figure 5 above shows an example on how hygiene factors are described in a job advertisement. In this specific advertisement, the salary is not revealed but other remuneration is discussed (gym, healthcare, insurance, compensation and relocation support). Work conditions and the physical workplace is described in a flattering way, which encourages the candidate to picture themselves working there. This advertisement is for a managerial position, so the relationship with the supervisor is not discussed as well as other ones. In addition to that, the motivators have been briefly mentioned through the ability of self-development and an independent role. These are aspects that bring additional motivation, but the candidate would not be dissatisfied without them.

Both hygiene factors and motivators have a great impact when considering relocation or changing jobs. Especially in relocation processes, where the risk is higher, there should be high hygiene and high motivation in order for assignments to be successful. Herzberg's theory is diving to the root of motivation, and it is deeper than these external factors, which is an important thing to considerate. Hiring "someone" as in choosing the first person that is qualified, or just sending "someone" from an organization to complete an assignment abroad may be easy and rather simple. The core issue is to get the people to stay in these positions and to complete the assignments successfully (toolshero 2018).

6 Qualitative research

For qualitative research, this paper includes a semi-structured interview regarding candidate relocation and decision making behind it. A total of 15 questions were asked, all of them can be found in Appendix 1. The purpose of this interview is to find out how the relocation process and motivators behind it are like for the candidate. In addition to the previous, the purpose is to figure out if those are aligned with the research conducted earlier. The hypothesis is, that the answers are aligned. The interview was arranged in person.

6.1 Interviewee

Our interviewee currently works in a senior executive-level position, in a large Finnish originated multinational company. He also provides consulting services. He has a long history in working in international software companies, and has relocated three times to different countries. The country of origin in all three cases has been Finland. He was acting as a corporate-expatriate during all relocations, and was sent for different assignments.

6.2 Overview of three different relocation cases

As earlier stated, there were similarities in all three occasions of relocation. The first relocation happened during 1999-2000, to the Netherlands as a Regional Manager of the Benelux-area. Our interviewee relocated by himself in the beginning, but his spouse joined him after giving birth to their twins (the children came with). No cross-cultural training was provided. During this time, the company's HR-department was not very well developed so organizational support system was rather weak.

The second time was to the USA, during 2002-2004, acting as a President of an US subsidiary. The interviewee located with the whole family from the beginning, and the spouse did not work during this time. Expatriate training (interviewee refers to cross-cultural training) was provided to both the spouse and to the interviewee. During this time, the company had developed a relocation support system within their HR-

department, so the organizational support was strong. This made the process of adapting – or the establishment stage - easier.

The third relocation was to Sweden between 2017-2018, acting as a Managing Director of a Swedish subsidiary. Interviewee relocated by himself, his family stayed in Finland. This relocation decision was not well supported by the family, which had affected the interviewee's wellbeing abroad (was not happy with the quality of life). This company provided good relocation support.

6.3 Results and analysis

The interviewee was asked to give an outlining of the main reasons for relocating. Interviewee answered that the main reason for all three relocations was personal growth and the opportunity to work abroad. This answer is well aligned with the research conducted earlier, which discovered that career development is one of the main reasons that drive candidates to relocate.

The interviewee would define good quality of life when relocating most importantly by housing, which is a crucial factor in the daily life. The housing aspect was not in a proper order when relocating to the US (candidate does not provide more detailed information), which impacted the quality of life negatively. The second thing interviewee brings up is earnings, they are required to be on a level that one does not need to consider it in a daily basis. During relocation in Sweden, interviewee told that taxation was extremely heavy before it got sorted out, and it caused some stress. Interviewee points out that his children did not go to school during the times abroad, but if they would have gone, the school system and the quality of it would have been very important. The interviewee states the following in addition to the question, which is very well aligned with the research conducted earlier:

“How the spouse can be employed is a very crucial thing. If the spouse does not have a meaningful career, usually the assignment ends quite shortly.”

When it comes to cultural differences, and even if all the three countries were in Europe and/or western countries, the interviewee tells that the reality of life was very different from what was originally thought. This indicates that there have possibly been some difficulties in adapting to the new environment, even when cross-cultural training has been provided. Interviewee also mentions that previous international experiences combined with frequent travelling did have a positive impact in the adjusting to host country (the earlier mentioned establishment stage).

As earlier stated, interviewee told that career development was one of the main reasons in making the decisions to relocate. The intrinsic motivators, for example personal growth, were the driving force rather than extrinsic ones.

Interviewee received relocation help and –packages. In the first two cases, there was received a “lump sum”. Jacqueline Briggs (Sterling Lexicon 2018) defines it as follows: “... A lump sum relocation typically consists of a single, fixed amount provided to an employee by an employer to move to a destination.” Other aspects included in the relocation help were covering moving- and traveling costs. In addition to this, the companies had partly outsourced the relocation services, and had local agencies supporting the interviewee (not explained in further detail).

6.4 Main findings

The answers of the interviewee were well aligned with the research done based on the literature. A new point of consideration that came up was the quality of housing, not only the location of it, but that it needs to fit the family. Family and their support were very important factors to our interviewee; as the research anticipated, the support network is crucial for a candidate relocating. During the third relocation of our interviewee, the family was not as supportive of the decision, and it affected his wellbeing negatively when being abroad. The organizational support was also very important for our interviewee, and for the most part it was done well. During the second relocation to the US, the candidate received a lump sum as a part of the relocation package. The lump sum-method relocation packages can be controversial, and maybe not as common nowadays as they were in the early 2000's.

The issues with lump sum can be for example the lack of transparency and the candidate not actually getting any help from the company (for example in bureaucratic aspects or in finding housing), but just monetary compensation (Briggs 2018).

During the second relocation to the US, the importance of cross-cultural training as well as spousal support was noted. Even though they are provided in the beginning, follow-ups and continuous support throughout the assignment could make a positive impact on the whole relocation. The wellbeing of the spouse is something that was noted during the research, and it also came up in the interview. If your spouse is dissatisfied and does not adapt to the new environment well, the time spent abroad will most probably not last long. A need of belonging, an intrinsic factor, is important to people. It comes for example through being accepted as a member of a group or a community, such as a workplace (Cherry 2021). Without this, one can feel like an outsider and as if they do not have a purpose.

As previously discussed, the most important factors for our interviewee to make the relocation decision was career- and personal development. Intrinsic motivators were the most important ones for this individual, but the situation is not same for all, for example someone can be more motivated about monetary compensation rather than developing themselves. The common patterns that were most important in all three relocation cases, were the importance of career development and support networks.

When discussing relocation during Covid-19, interviewee expresses the main concern being not able to even physically relocate in the current circumstances because of the restrictions in global borders. Interviewee adds that relocation is still a major way to improve one's professional capabilities, and would certainly recommend pursuing it, especially if an individual does not have a family. This was the same conclusion that the research earlier provided; relocating and making decisions without needing to take other people in to consideration is a lot easier.

As a conclusion, the semi-structural interview provided data that resonated the research conducted earlier very well, as well as Herzberg's two factor theory. The ability to see to the roots of three different relocations and reasoning behind them, proved the research conducted correct.

7 Recruitment trends 2020-2021

This section is fully based in one's own experience in working in the recruitment field during Covid-19. Doing research about candidate experience and recruitment trends was a part of the job, and naturally they are closely tied together with the topic of the research. The following aspects are something that were not part of the niche research, but add interesting insights and broadness to it.

Virtual recruitment has been brought up multiple times in this research, and it certainly is something that 2020 and the beginning of the pandemic brought along. As earlier stated, video- and phone interviews are nothing new, but the usage of them grew exponentially during 2020. I personally took part in three recruitment processes as a candidate during 2020-2021, and there was not a single interview in-person. This will probably remain as a standard at least in the beginning of (international) recruitment processes.

Candidate experience in recruitment processes is something that people have become more aware of, especially when recruiting high-demand experts in the tech field. Good communication flow and keeping the candidates up to date are the base of a great candidate experience. Especially when companies outsource their recruitment processes, candidates might feel somewhat alone if no one gives them feedback after interviews, neither from the recruitment agency or from the client company. Keeping every stakeholder in the process updated is essential. The high-demand professionals know their worth, so good communication equals a sign of respect.

Social media and AI are tools that recruitment professional use in increasing volumes. Since the younger generation is entering the workforce, recruiters need to find new ways to source talent, because not everyone is active on LinkedIn. You need to be where your talent is – in this case, different social media platforms. It is not uncommon for young people to follow companies that they are interested in for example on Instagram, to see the daily life and people of the company. Being active and up to date on Instagram is a great way for a company to increase their visibility and to develop their employer brand.

It also is a cost-efficient way to promote job openings, and get truly motivated and interested candidates. For example, someone has been following company X and is enjoying the content they produce, and the company culture that comes across through it. Company X then posts on Instagram that they have an open position which matches this person's skillset. They are quite likely to apply for the position, and now company X has a candidate that identifies with their values and is sincerely interested in the company. Posting to different platforms brings a company different types of jobseekers, and diversity is essential.

When one is screening for roles and needs to contact a large number of candidates, tools such as Meet Alfred can make the process easier and more time-efficient by contacting the candidates for you. In addition to using automatization tools to save time, artificial intelligence tools can be used to for example avoid unconscious bias. "In the hiring process, unconscious bias happens when you form an opinion about candidates based solely on first impressions" (Pavlou NDA). This can occur in a situation where one is scanning through LinkedIn profiles and decides not to contact someone based on their (non-)activity on LinkedIn for example. People practice unconscious bias every day in different fields, not just in recruitment.

8 Conclusion

The answer to the thesis question cannot be stated just in one word, but rather two words: it depends. Recruitment processes depends on the role, the company and the candidate. That said, the general structure of the recruitment process is as follows: recognizing the need for expertise (can be because of multiple reasons) and realising one needs international expertise, either due to restrictions in the talent pool or because a certain assignment or position requires someone with international expertise. After this, the job description and skill requirements are defined and either it is assigned to a recruitment agency, or the company themselves post the advertisements and start searching for a suitable person. Co-operation is also quite common. If the role requires screening or headhunting, it takes place in this stage. After this interviews are arranged, followed by possible background checks, and then the offer. Different hygiene- and motivation factors have a major impact when considering change of jobs, but it is important to acknowledge that different factors drive different people.

Relocation process starts simultaneously with the recruitment process, when the candidate is first exposed to the idea of relocating after a job. This is called the exploration stage, and during this stage the candidate considers the different factors that are affected by the possible relocation. Once the candidate decides to take the offer and relocates, the establishment stage starts, where the individual and their family starts to adapt to the new environment. During the embeddedness stage, progress in career and full adaptation to the new location occurs. Support from the organization and from the family is crucial in the relocation process, and career development is usually ultimately the most important reason in decision making. This was confirmed by the qualitative research done.

The most noticeable impact Covid-19 has had in recruitment processes, is that it has made them mainly virtual. People are hesitant in taking risks and changing jobs, especially if they need to relocate. In some cases, relocation is not even possible. Further, more niche, research is needed to determine the effects of Covid-19 and recruitment processes and relocation, but it can be said that if a company truly wants someone to work for them, they are flexible and prepared for making things work even during these uncertain times.

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Interview questions

1. How many times have you relocated?
2. Which positions you relocated for, how senior were they?
3. What was the country of origin, and what was the destination country?
4. Were you a self-initiated expatriate or were you a corporate expatriate?
5. Please outline main reasons behind your relocation decision.
6. Did you spouse receive any support when relocating?
7. What was your support system like, both from family- and organization side?
8. What defined a good quality of life when relocating?
9. Did you face any cultural difficulties when relocating? Did you and your spouse receive any cross-cultural training?
10. Would you say that previous international experiences and traveling made your relocation easier?
11. How big of a factor career development was when relocating?
12. Which were more important regarding career development; intrinsic motivators or extrinsic motivators?
13. Did you receive any relocation help or –packages?
14. How do you think Covid-19 has affected relocation?

15. Is there anything else you would like to say?